2025

ALL ABOUT HISTORY ANNUAL

The events, people & discoveries that changed the world

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FUTURE
VOLUME 11

ALL ABOUT HISTORY ANNUAL

When it comes to history, we like to cover as many bases as possible on **All About History**. For every Carthaginian queen we'll make sure we'll have a WWII hero. For each swashbuckling Tudor seafarer, we have the secrets of Aztec folklore. There really is a lot of history to pick from, so whittling down this year's crop of features to highlight has been a challenge. What we've got for you here is a wide selection of tales from the ancient past up to icons of the 20th century. You can learn about the pioneering detective who practically invented modern investigation practices (and the fact he started as a criminal), discover the origins of some of your favourite fairy tales, learn about the mission to get Jewish children out of Germany before the Second World War and uncover the wonders of the gods of Egypt. Another packed annual in other words, which we hope you enjoy.

Illustration: Joe Cummings

FUTURE

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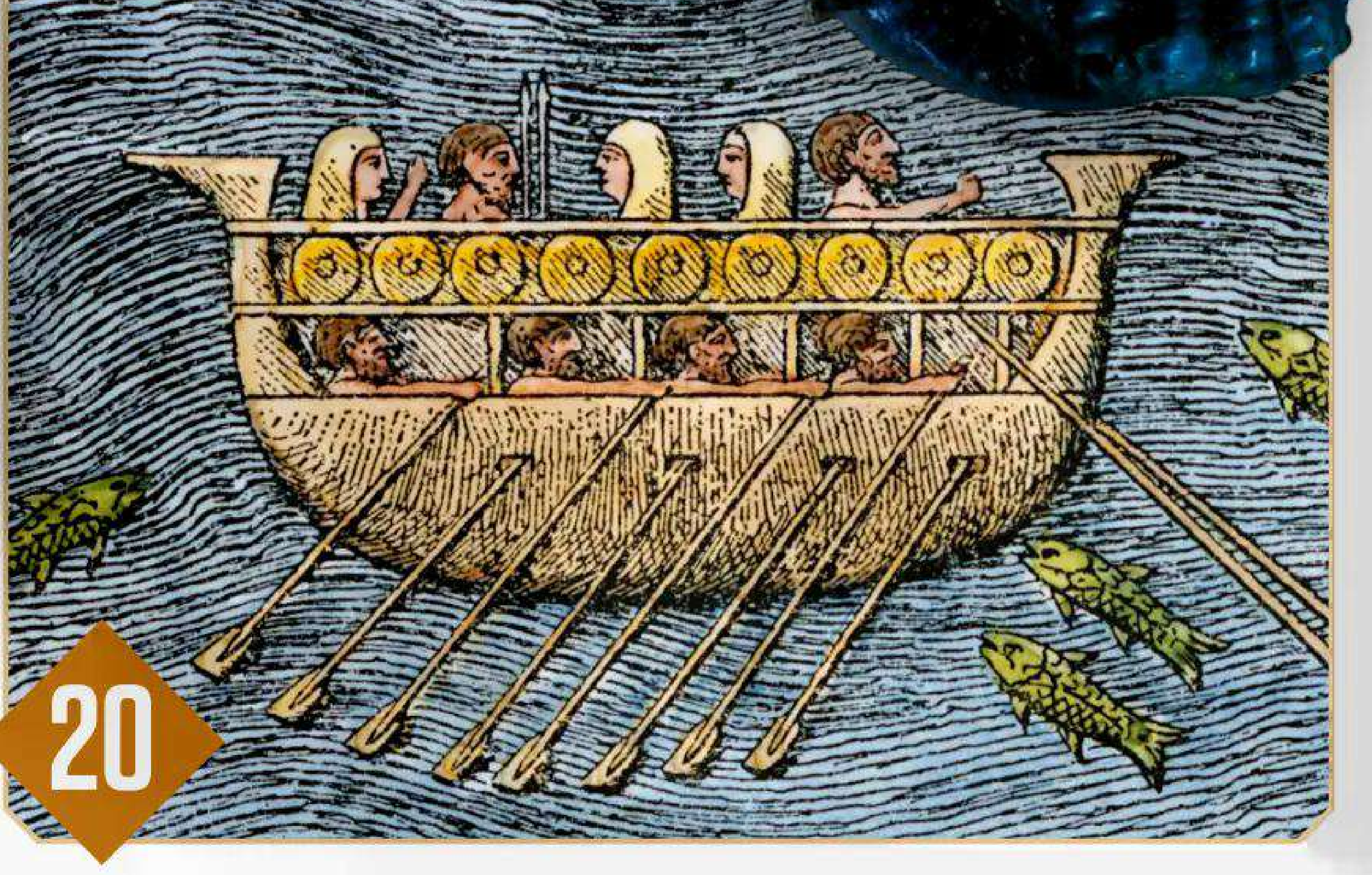
CONTENTS

THE ANCIENT WORLD

010 Gods of Egypt
Discover how ancient Egyptians explained the mysteries of the world

020 Who were the Phoenicians
Uncover the civilisation that gave us a model for the alphabet and more

026 Queen Dido
What do we know about the semi-mythical founder of Carthage?



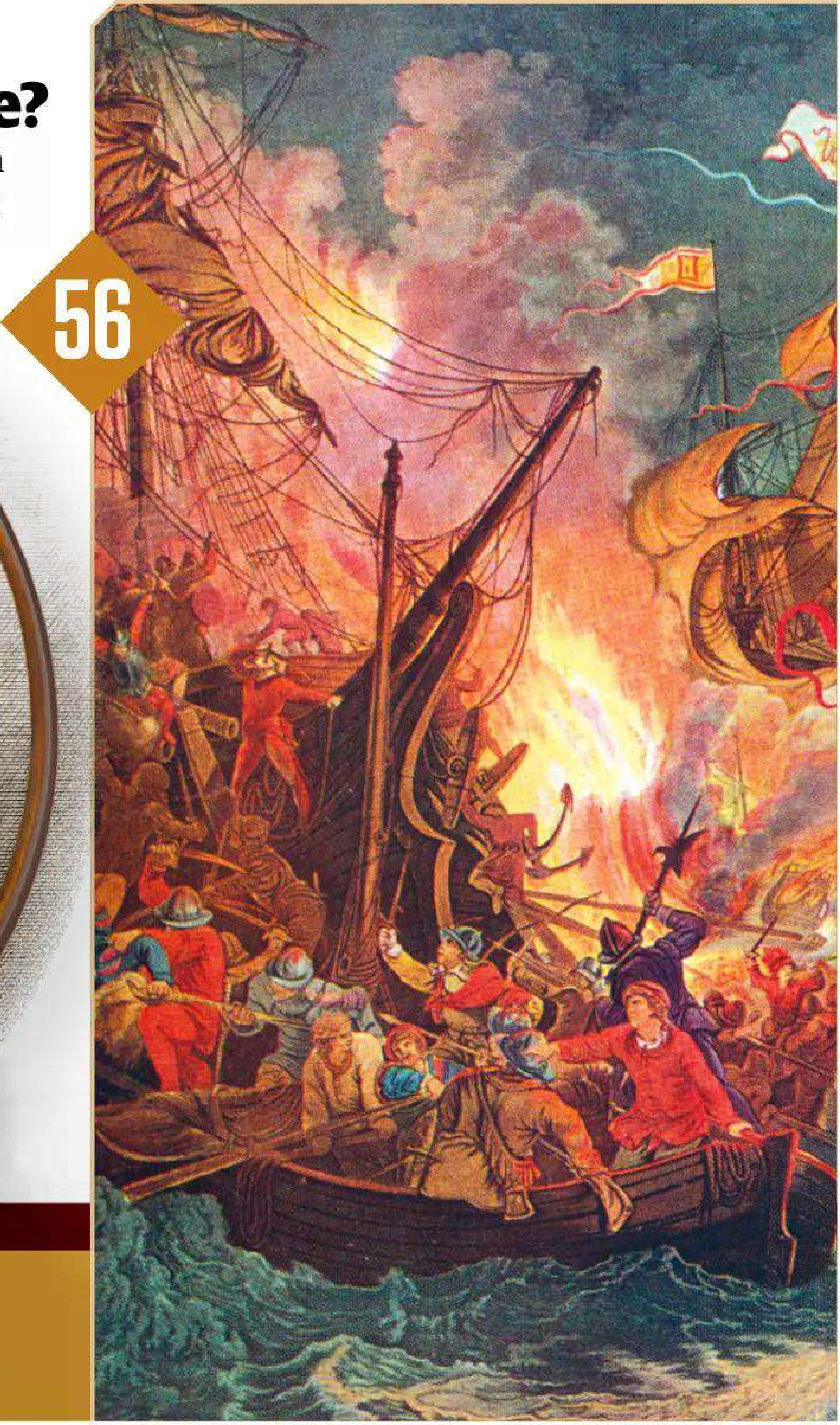
HISTORY OF ROYALS

034 Ferdinand & Isabella
How the powerful and ambitious monarchs united Spain

040 The Poison Princess?
Does Lucrezia Borgia deserve her infamous reputation?

044 The Curse of the Grimaldis
Did the spell of a medieval witch doom the royal family of Monaco?

050 What's in a Name?
20 strangest royal nicknames from history and where they came from

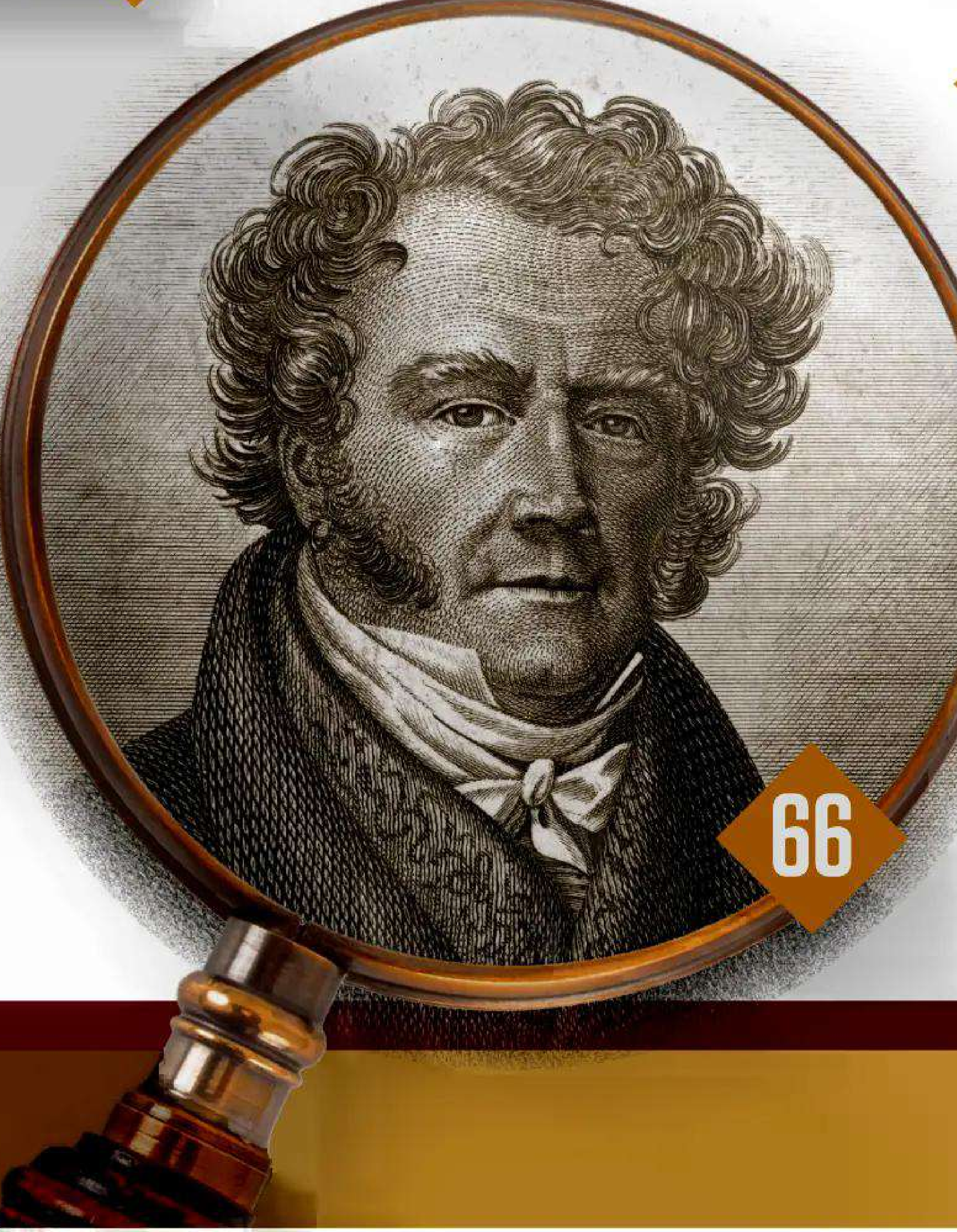


CRIME & PUNISHMENT

056 Tudor Pirates
Discover the gentlemen thieves who terrorised the high seas

066 The First Detective
How Francois Vidocq went from criminal to crime-solving innovator

072 Public Enemy No. 1
The hunt for John Dillinger and how it helped found the FBI



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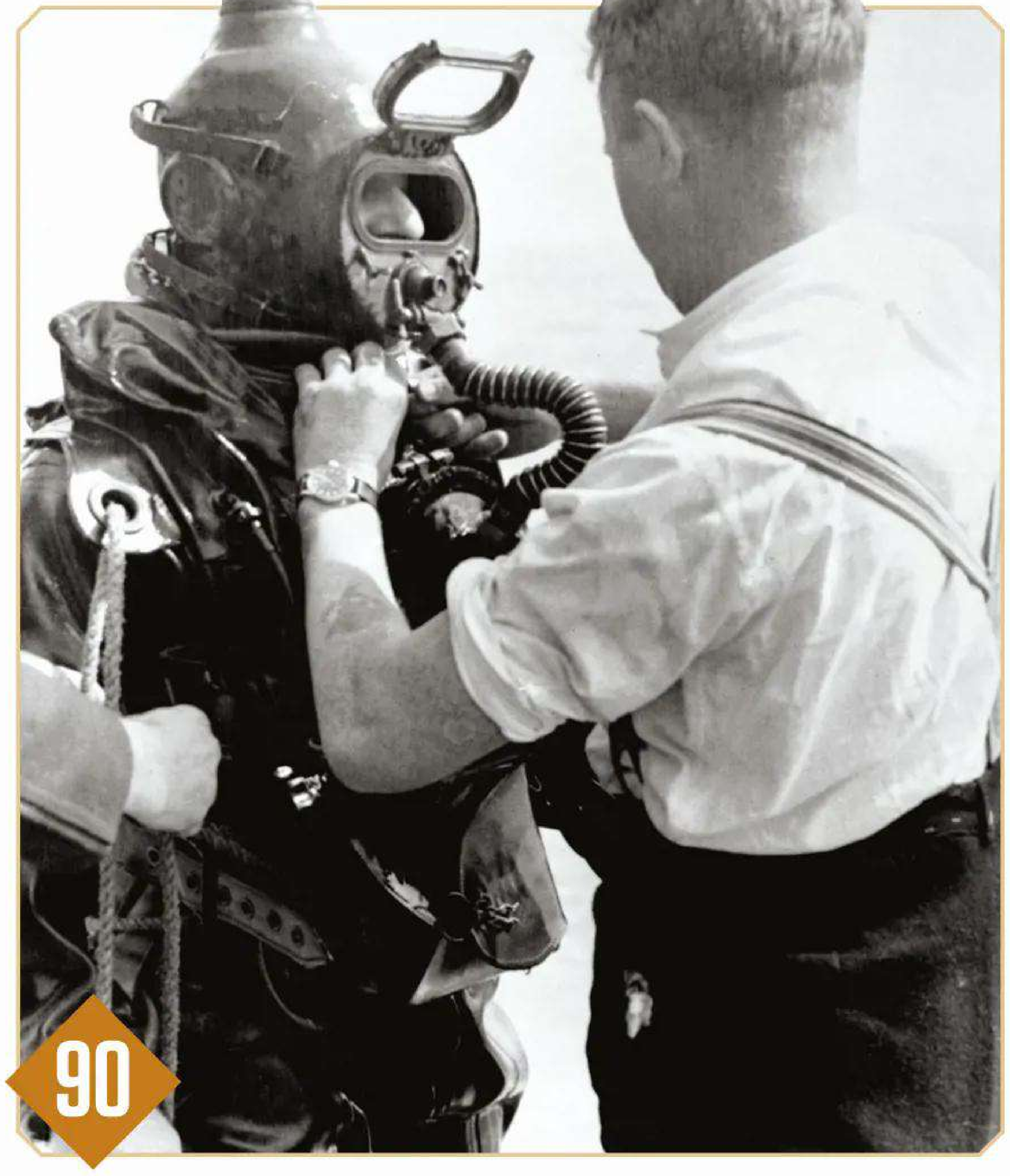
WAR STORIES

080 The Rise of Napoleon
Why the French Republic was seduced by its charismatic and calculating war hero

090 The Disappearance of Commander Crabb
How a WWII hero vanished, never to return

096 Get The Children Out!
The story of 10,000 Jewish children who were rescued from the clutches of the Nazis



AMAZING WOMEN

104 Frida Kahlo
How this icon of art survived near-death to become a revolutionary figure

114 They Weren't Just Friends
The history of queer women as Explained by four experts

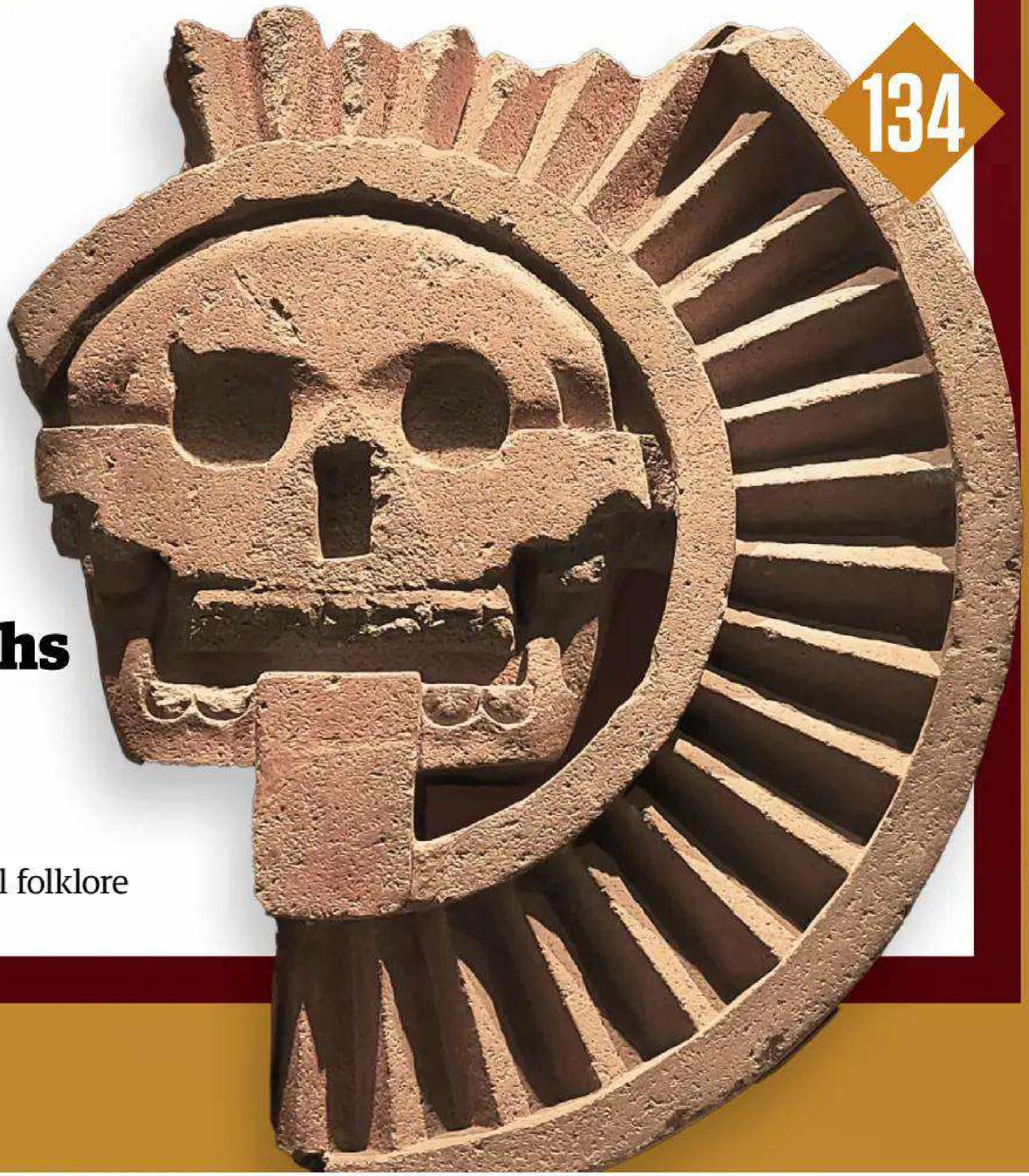
120 Mama Africa
The remarkable life of Miriam Makeba and her fight against injustice

MYTHS, LEGENDS & TALES

128 Irish Folklore
From leprechauns to banshees, what were the origins of these mystical tales?

134 Behind the Aztec Myths
Cut through the colonial legacy to understand this misunderstood civilisation

138 The First Fairy Tales
Discover the origins of your favourite magical folklore



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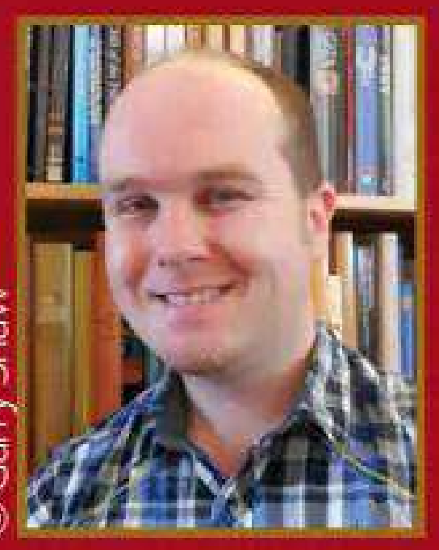
THE ANCIENT WORLD

EXPERT BIO



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GARRY J SHAW

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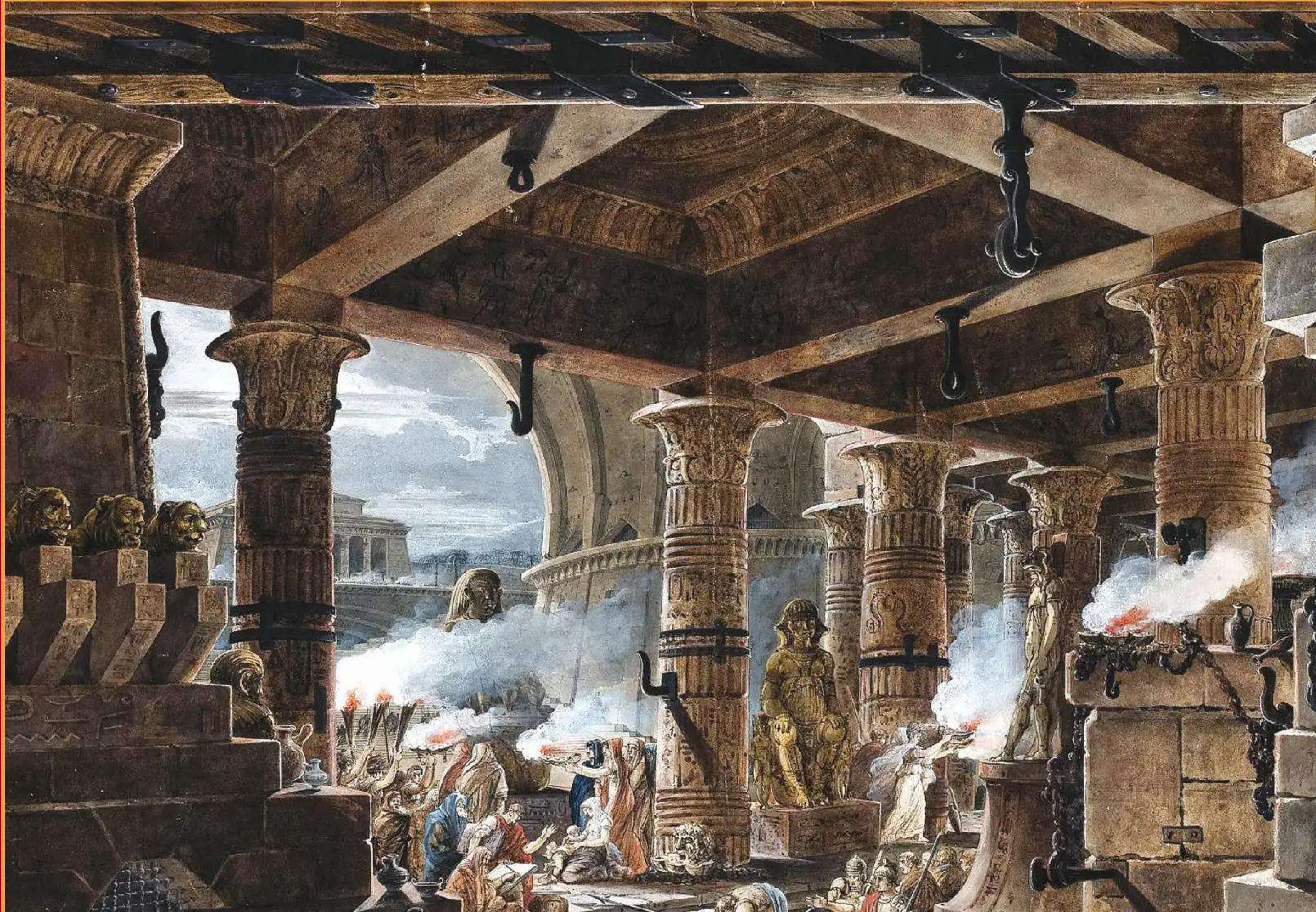
Illustration by Joe Cummings

GODS OF EGYPT

Discover how ancient Egyptians explained the mysteries of the world

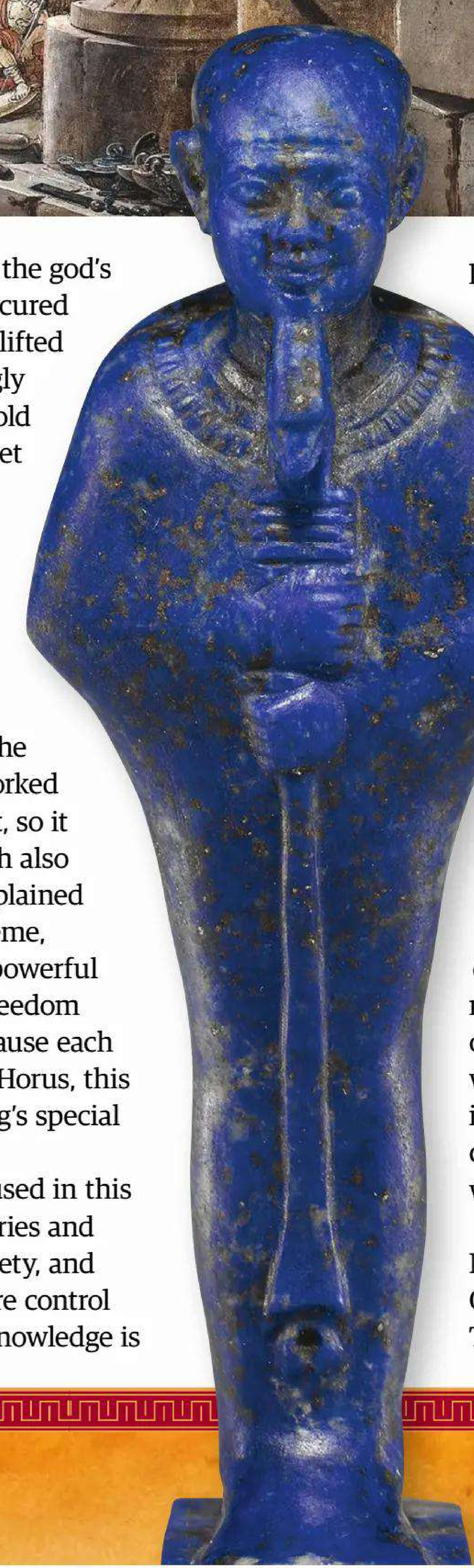
Written by Garry Shaw

The goddess Isis had poisoned the sun god Re. She watched as various deities approached the ailing divinity, each desperately trying to heal him, but none could find a cure to his suffering. One second the god was burning up. The next, he was freezing. He shook. His heart was on fire. The situation was getting desperate, but the gods had little information to go on. All they knew was that he'd been bitten by a snake and poisoned by its venom. Isis could help, but she held back for now. After all, this poisoning was all part of her plan to learn the sun god's secret name, a key to his power, hidden deep in his belly – and he wouldn't give it up easily. ▶



ABOVE Carnelian scarab depicting the revered goddess Isis and her son Horus

LEFT *Interior View Of An Egyptian Temple*, by Jean-François Thomas de Thomon, 1803



Earlier that day, Isis had collected some of Re's drool while he slept, and mixed it with soil in the shape of a snake. Because all divine fluids had creative power – even Re's drool – the creature burst into life. She placed the snake on a path where Re walked each day, and just as she'd planned, when he strolled by, it bit him. The poison flooded through his body. From that moment, Re had writhed in pain. Eventually, the gods summoned Isis for help. As a goddess of magic, perhaps she could find a solution? She approached Re and immediately asked him for his secret name – only this could save him, she said. But the stubborn sun god refused to answer truthfully. He told her many of his names, none his secret one. Only when the pain worsened, and no relief was in sight, did Re finally relent. He whispered his secret name to Isis, passing its power into her body. Her plan had worked, so there was no reason to prolong the god's suffering. Using her magic, Isis cured Re. Pleased that his illness had lifted – and apparently in a surprisingly forgiving mood – the sun god told Isis that she could pass his secret name to her son, Horus.

This myth, known from various copies written in around 1200 BCE, serves as the introduction to a spell meant to relieve the suffering brought on by snake venom. It was a guarantee of efficacy to the ancient reader: the spell had worked for Isis in the mythological past, so it would work again. But the myth also had a wider significance – it explained something. Thanks to Isis' scheme, she gained access to the most powerful magic in the cosmos and the freedom to pass it on to Horus. And because each pharaoh was an incarnation of Horus, this myth served to explain the king's special position in society.

> **"THANKS TO ISIS' SCHEME, SHE GAINED ACCESS TO THE MOST POWERFUL MAGIC IN THE COSMOS"**

Egyptian myths were often used in this way. They explained the mysteries and complexities of nature and society, and in doing so, brought a little more control over the chaos all around us. Knowledge is power, but it also provides comfort. From our ultimate origins, to the reasons for the moon's phases and the sun's destination at night, the ancient Egyptians asked questions about everything. Their explanations – their answers to the universe's big questions – are what we today regard as myths.

MYTHS OF CREATION

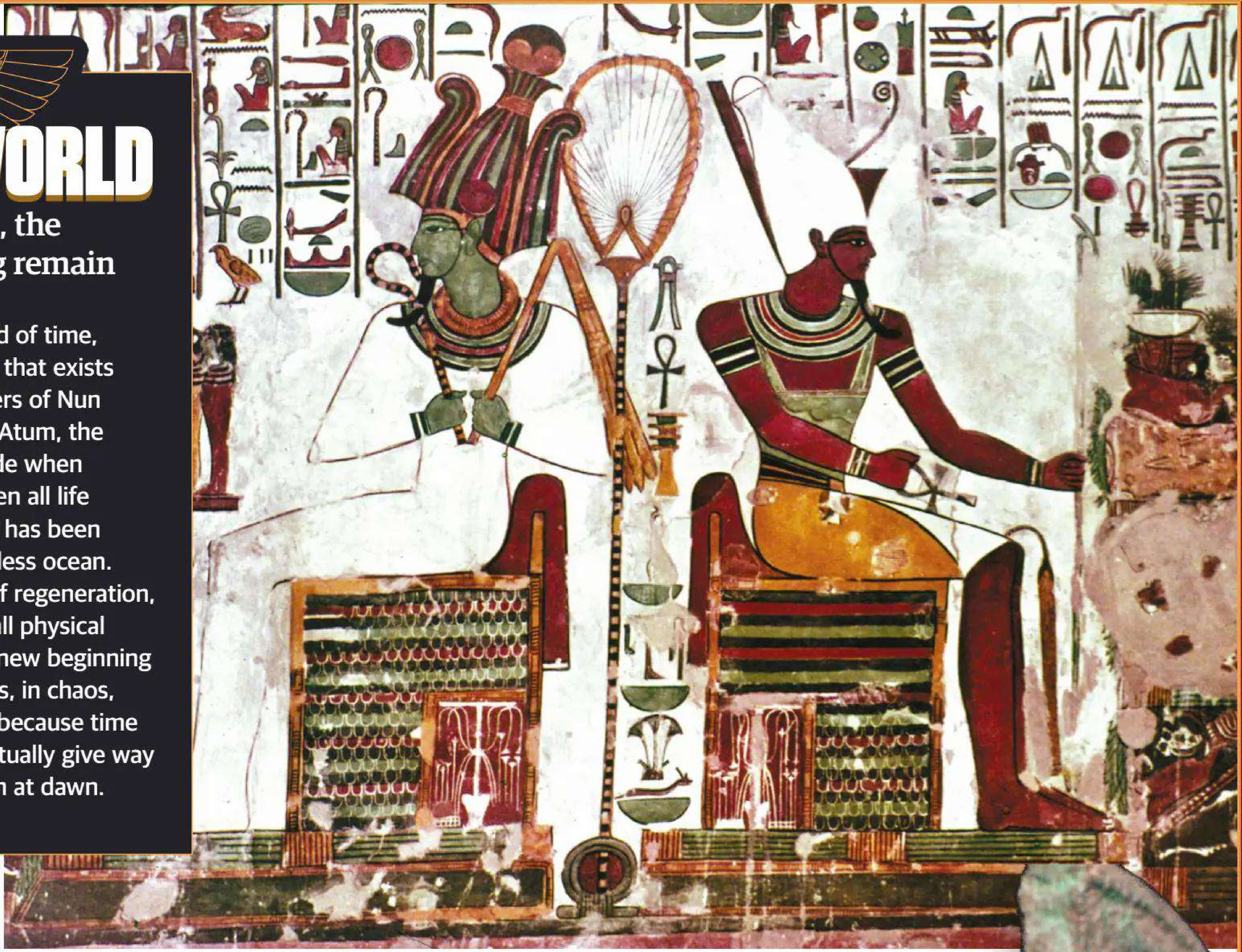
All civilisations develop explanations for our origins – it's impossible to avoid pondering the start of the universe or where we all came from. The ancient Egyptians were no different, except in the sheer variety of their conclusions. Because each province had its own major divinity, each at the centre of that region's mythology, there were many variations on how creation occurred. In fact, there was no single explanation for most things in Egyptian religion; different, often contradictory, ideas existed simultaneously without causing anyone headaches.

Take the priests of Hermopolis in Middle Egypt for example. For them, the Ogdoad were responsible for creation. These eight gods – four frog-headed

THE END OF THE WORLD

When the cosmos collapses, the ingredients for a new beginning remain

According to the *Book Of The Dead*, at the end of time, chaos will overturn balance in the cosmos. All that exists will vanish, to be replaced by the infinite waters of Nun – the universal flood that surrounds creation. Atum, the oldest manifestation of the sun god, will decide when this happens. Yet, even in this bleak time, when all life is extinguished, hope remains. When creation has been upturned, there will be two snakes in the endless ocean. One will be Osiris, who represents the force of regeneration, and the other will be Atum, a god that holds all physical creation within himself. The ingredients for a new beginning will continue to exist. To the ancient Egyptians, in chaos, there was always the potential for order, and because time was cyclical, the end of the world would eventually give way to a new era, just as the sun always rises again at dawn.



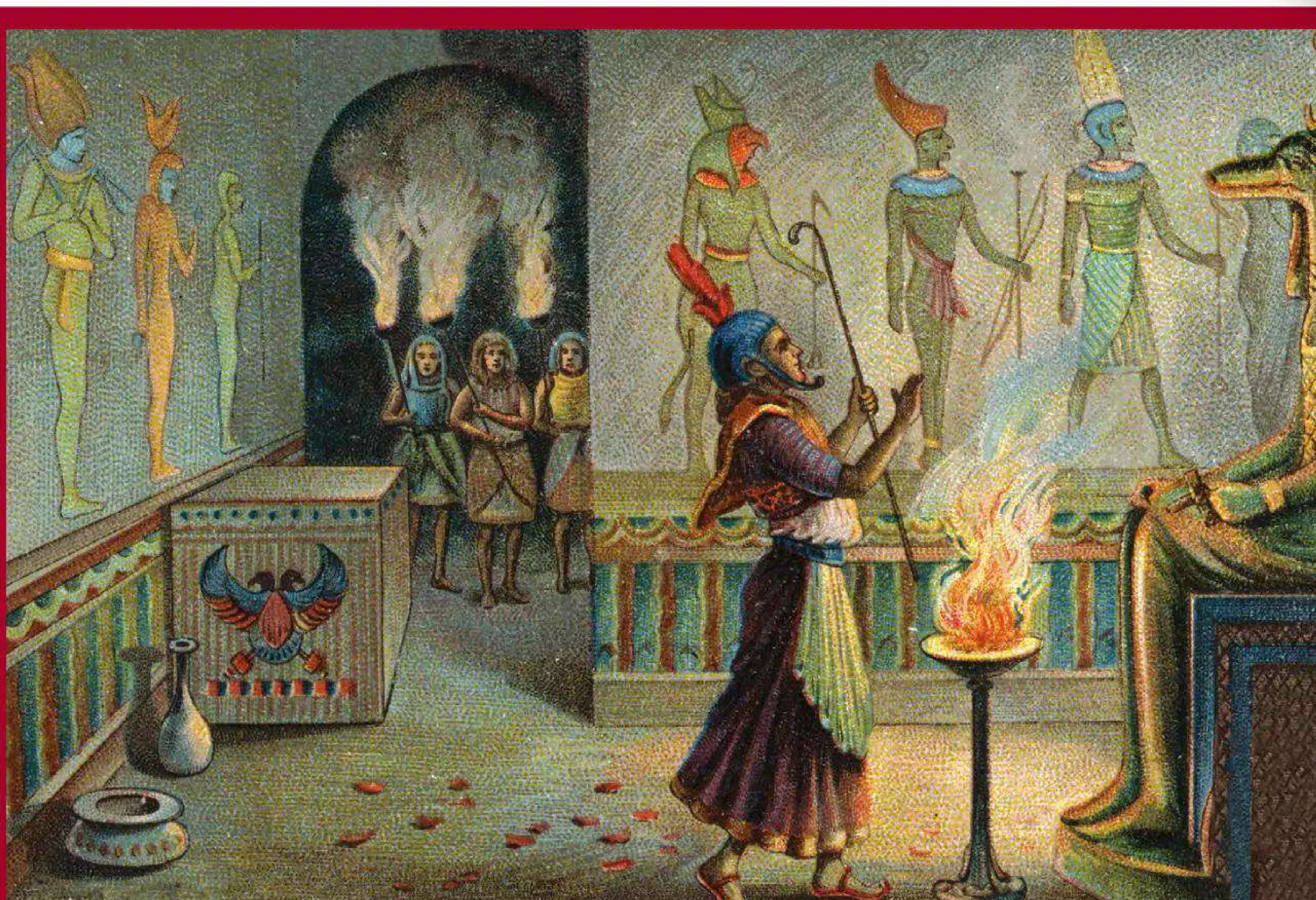
males and four snake-headed females – represented different aspects of the pre-creation universe. In pairs, they embodied darkness, the endless inert water, hiddenness, and infinity. At the beginning of time, they stood on a mound of earth where a lotus grew, and there, watched as the sun god emerged from its flower. Meanwhile, at Edfu in southern Egypt, things were a bit different. There, the god Horus created all things, and Edfu's temple stood on the first mound to emerge from a destructive flood, brought under control by gods cutting canals. At Memphis, which stood just south of modern Cairo, Ptah was the ultimate creator. This god of craftsmen and the creative spark conceived of creation in his heart – the source of thought in Egyptian belief, rather than the brain – and through his tongue, announced all beings into creation.

The priests of Heliopolis, a city that now lies beneath Cairo, developed what

LEFT A statuette of the creator god Ptah, who is typically shown tightly wrapped in a cloak and wearing a skull cap

BELOW The pharaohs of ancient Egypt were considered as divine mediators between the gods and men

RIGHT Bronze head of the sun god Re, a central deity in ancient Egypt



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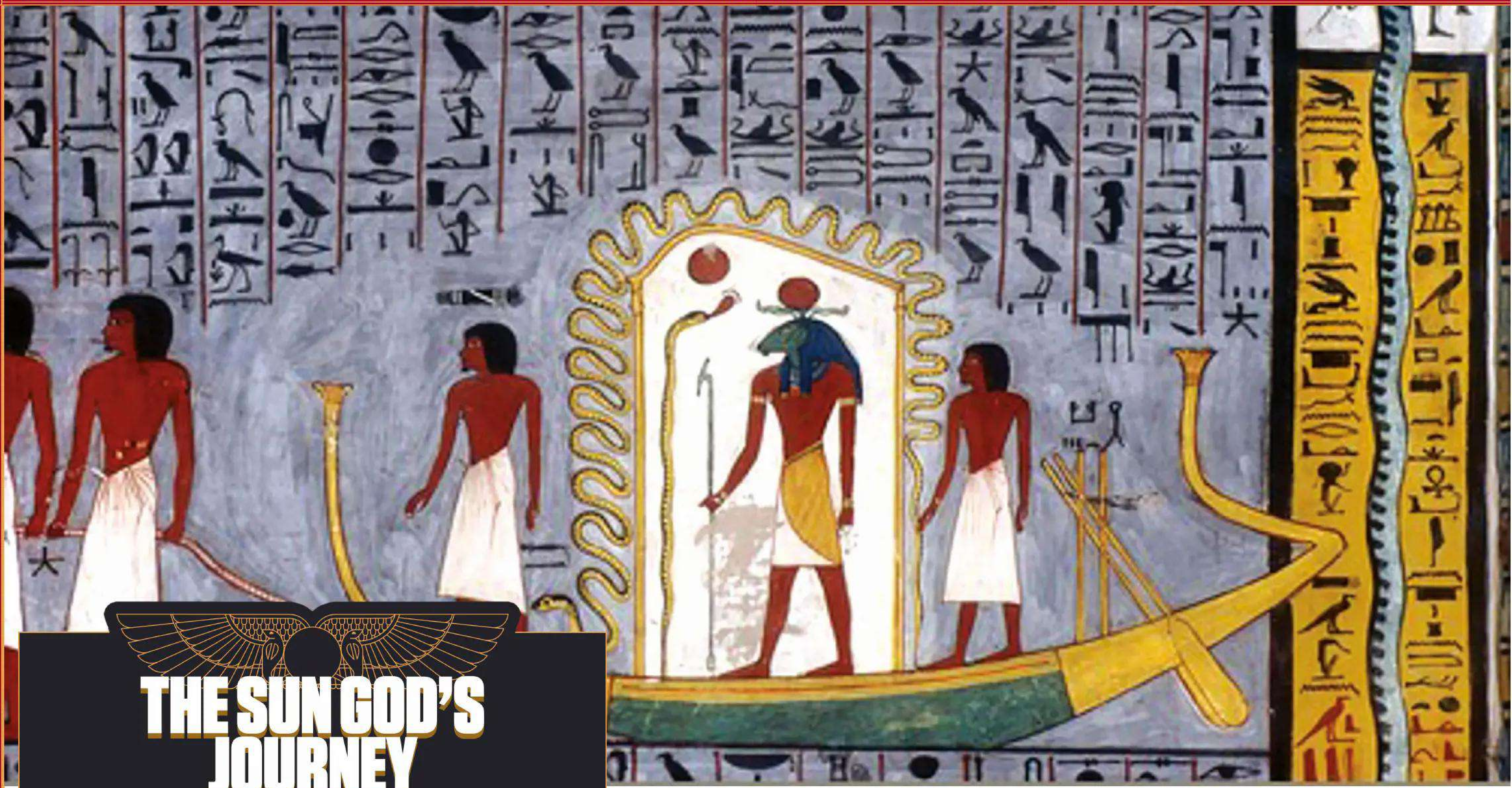


THE SUN GOD'S JOURNEY

Explaining the movement of the sun was an important part of Egyptian mythology

The sun god took different forms as he crossed the sky. He was Khepri when young in the morning, Re at his strongest at midday, and Atum when old in the evening. At night, he travelled through the afterlife realm, where he faced challenges, but was re-energized in the middle of the night thanks to the power of Osiris. He was then reborn as a baby at dawn, ready for the cycle to begin again. It is this nightly drama that is shown in the decoration of the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings.

Despite being a fundamental part of Egyptian belief, this myth could be adapted depending on local geography. The Faiyum Oasis, for example, lies to the west of where the sun was traditionally believed to set, so the explanation for the sun god's movements had to be changed. According to the *Book Of The Faiyum*, in the morning, the sun god rose from the waters of Lake Qarun, which dominates the oasis. He sailed across the sky and eventually set in the western side of the lake. Upon entering the lake, the god transformed into a crocodile and swam through its rejuvenating waters, becoming young again in time to board his day boat on the eastern shore. The new day could now begin.

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

is perhaps the best known of Egypt's creation myths. In the beginning, the universe was a still, dark, and endless ocean, represented by the god Nun. Lost within this ocean was a seed, the god Atum, who gained self-awareness. Atum separated himself from the endless ocean, expanding like a bubble or balloon to create a space in the waters – the first land. Then, either through spitting, sneezing, or masturbating (depending on the variation of the myth), Atum created the gods Shu and Tefnut. He passed his ka – a form of lifeforce – into their bodies and gave them the breath of life, enabling them to be active in the world.

Shu represented the atmosphere and dryness, but the meaning of Tefnut is harder to define – she may have been moisture or the afterlife realm's atmosphere, mirroring the role of Shu. Soon after, the two newborn gods went missing, so Atum sent his Sole Eye to find them. The light that shone down from this manifestation of Atum's power became the first sunrise. Atum could now be called Re-Atum, representing the sun god at his most powerful and his oldest. Shu and Tefnut went on to become the parents of the earth god Geb and the sky goddess Nut. And in turn, these two deities gave birth to Osiris, Isis, Seth, and Nephthys. Together, these nine divinities formed the Ennead, the first gods and goddesses. Some would go on to serve as the first kings of Egypt.

THE HEAVENLY COW

After creation, the sun god Re reigned as king of Egypt. When he became old, he heard that humans were planning an uprising against him, so he summoned an assembly of the gods to decide on a plan. Re felt that it was time to eradicate his creation, but he was willing to hear other opinions. No one disagreed. Nun suggested that Re should dispatch his Eye in the form of the goddess Hathor – usually a goddess of love, music, and sex – to deal with the rebellious humans. The gods thought that this was a good idea, so Hathor duly transformed into the Eye and flew off towards the desert where the humans were hiding. When she found them, she slaughtered everybody, and fell into such a blood-thirsty rage that she changed from the friendly Hathor into the fearsome goddess Sekhmet. Meanwhile, back in his palace, Re was having second

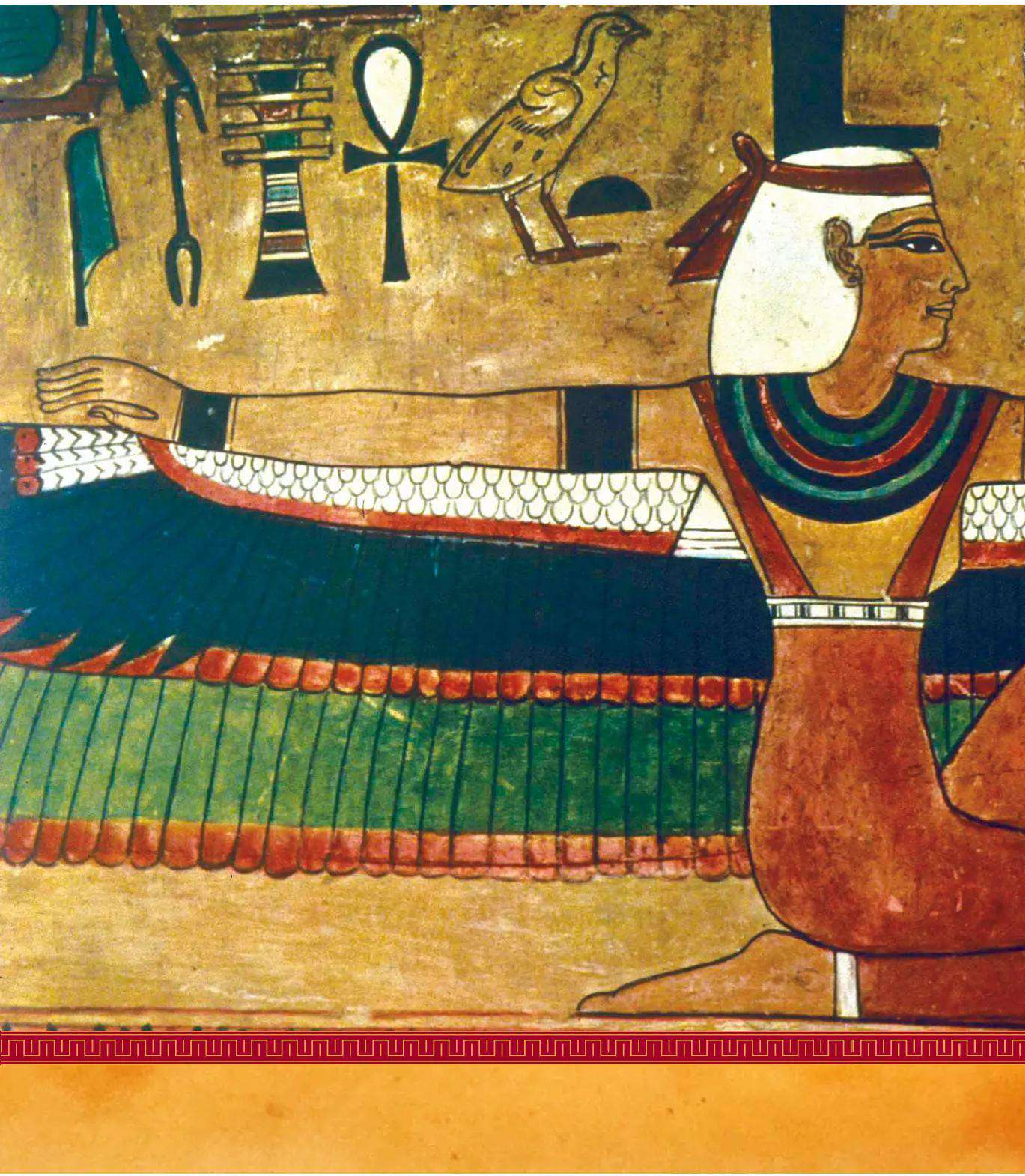
> "RE WAS APPALLED TO LEARN THAT HUMANS HAD CREATED WEAPONS AND THE CONCEPT OF MURDER"

thoughts. If all humanity died, he'd be a king without subjects, and that wouldn't be any fun at all. When Hathor-Sekhmet arrived at the palace to report on her mission, Re told her to stop killing people, but she refused to listen and flew from the audience hall to continue her rampage.

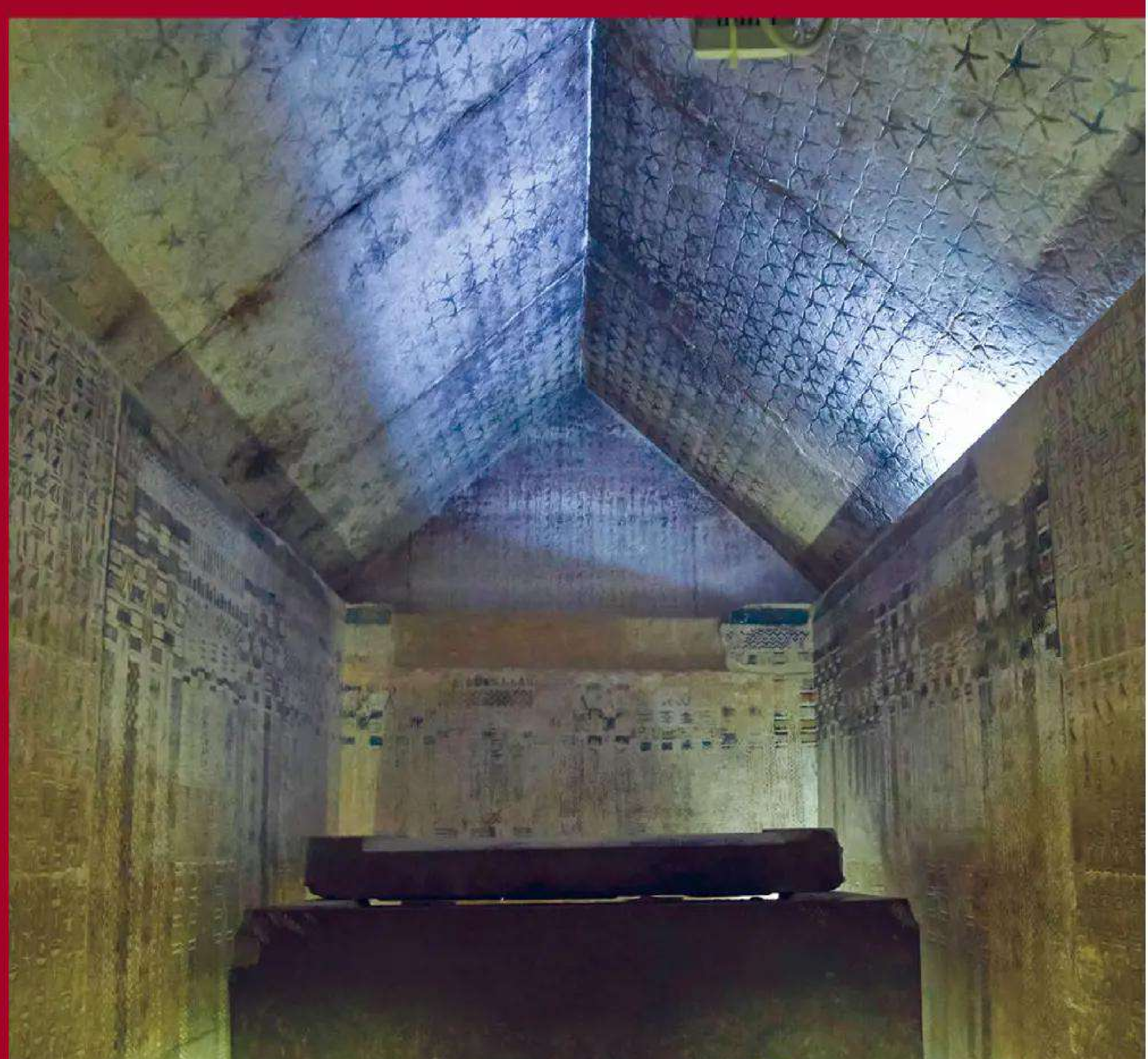
In order to save what remained of humanity, Re sent his servants to gather up red ochre and to brew vast quantities of beer. When it was all gathered and ready, they mixed the two ingredients together, turning the beer red, and the next morning, poured 7,000 jars of the concoction into the fields where Hathor-Sekhmet slept. When the goddess awoke, she thought that she was wading in blood. She drank the beer and became so drunk that she fell asleep, abandoning her mission to destroy humanity. To ensure that this never happened again, Re issued a decree that beer should be brewed for all festivals dedicated to Hathor (thus explaining the drunkenness associated with her celebrations).

Re had managed to undo the mistake he'd made, but he still felt weary. He wanted to abdicate the throne, but as a god, his only option was to depart for the sky. Despite having some second thoughts, his resolve to leave was strengthened when he learned that humans had created weapons and the concept of murder. Appalled, he asked the goddess Nut to transform into a heavenly cow and carry him into the sky. In doing so, the sun god separated himself from creation.

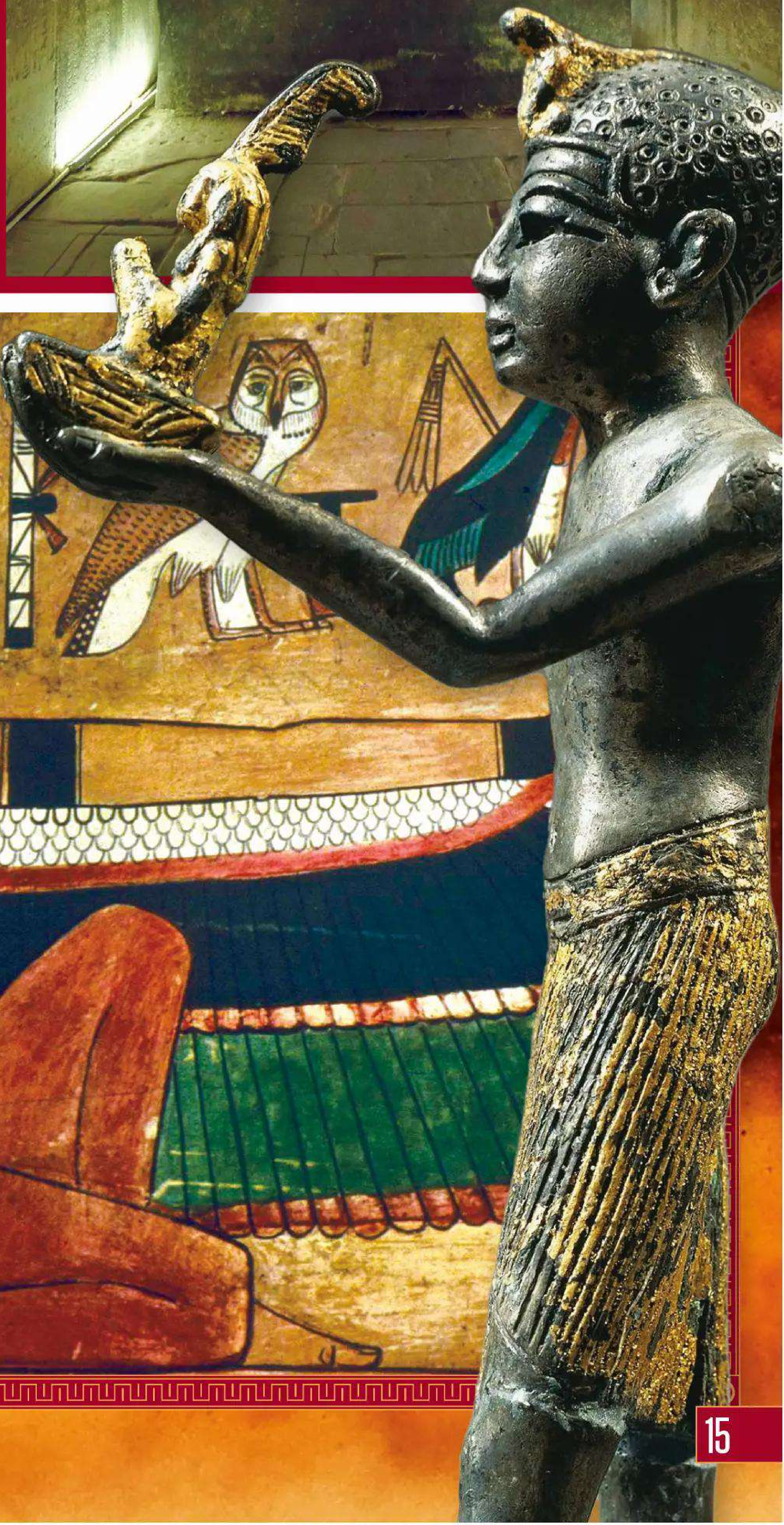
Now sailing in the sky, across the underside of the infinite ocean, and onward, down beneath the horizon into the afterlife realm, Re had begun the sequence of day and night. The god Thoth manifested as the moon and served the sun god as his wise vizier. Stars and planets appeared in the night sky. The cosmos had taken its current and final form. Re's son Shu now assumed the kingship in his place, until he too eventually departed for the sky, later to be followed by Geb. The kingship then ▶



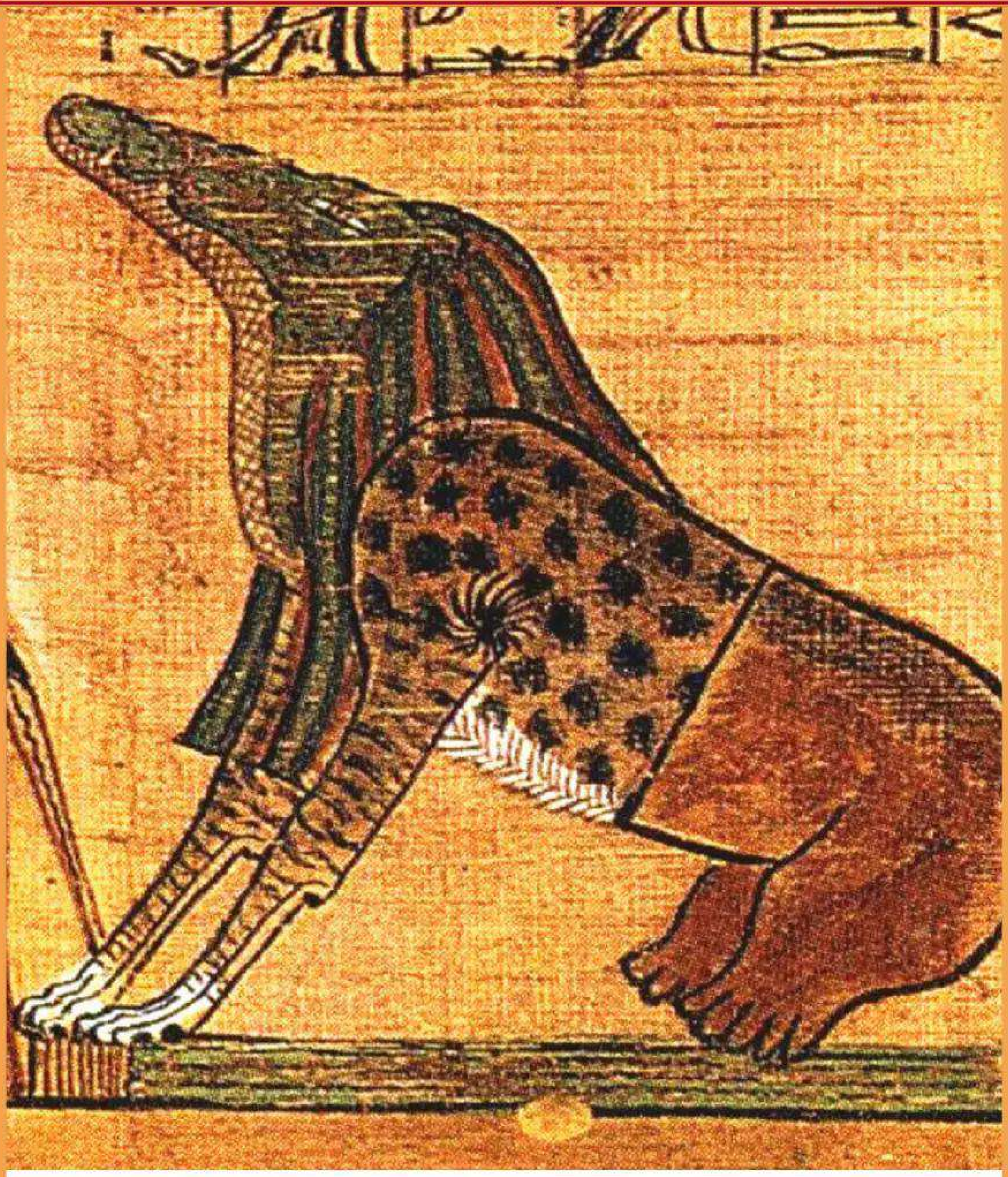
BELOW The goddess Isis was usually shown in human form, though sometimes with the addition of protective wings



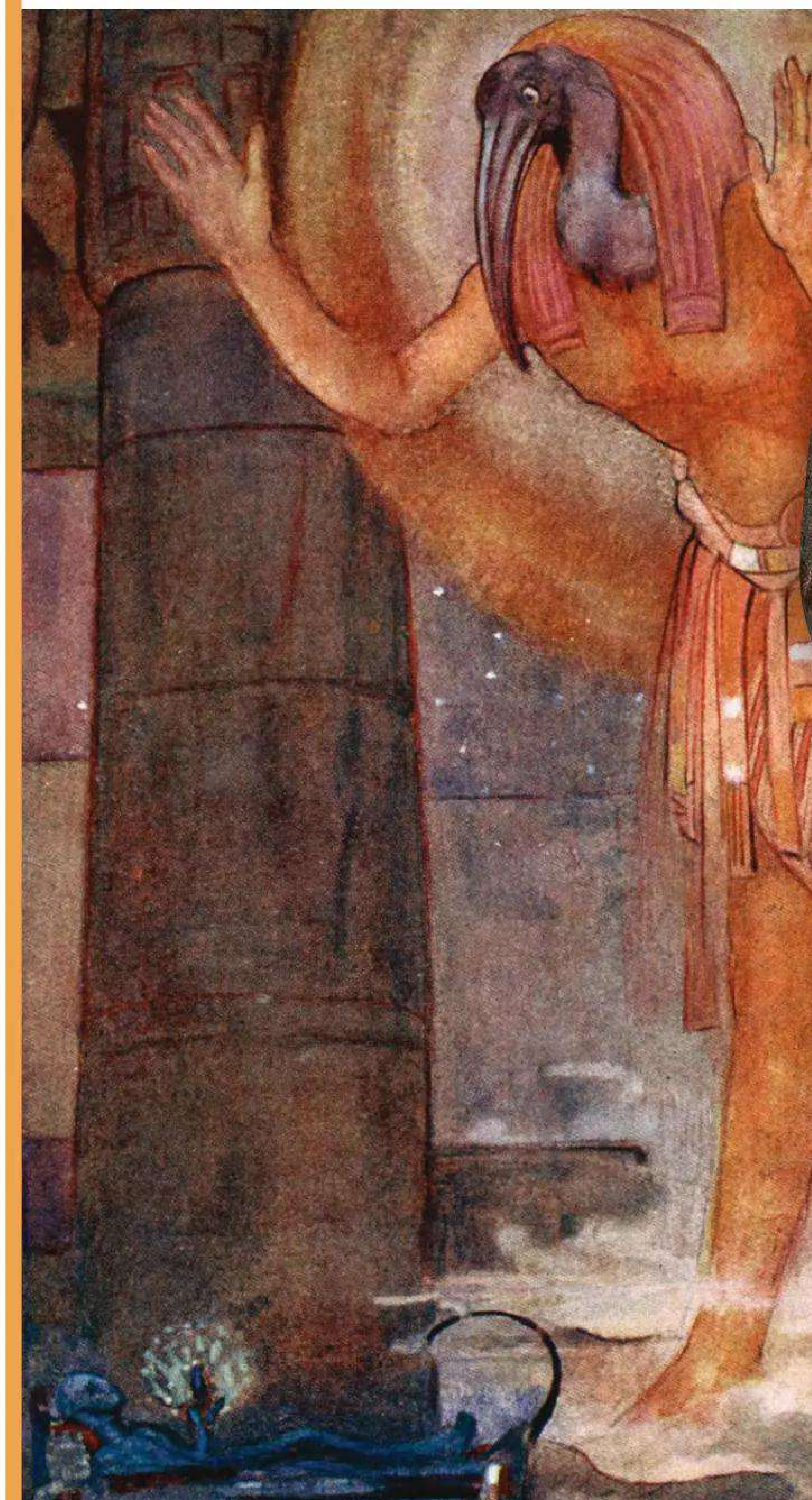
RIGHT The Pyramid Texts on the walls of the Pyramid of Unas at Saqqara, built around 2300 BCE, contain the earliest known references to Osiris and Isis



RIGHT-INSET Statue of a pharaoh holding an offering for Maat, the goddess of truth



ABOVE According to the *Book Of The Dead*, Ammit, the devourer, ate those who failed to pass Osiris' judgement



BELOW God of the moon, Thoth, was usually portrayed as having a man's body with the head of an ibis

RIGHT Worshipped at the city of Bubastis, the goddess Bastet was typically shown in the form of a cat

passed to Osiris, whose story is one of ancient Egypt's most enduring myths.

THE DEATH OF OSIRIS

As a god of regeneration and king of the blessed dead, Osiris remained important throughout ancient Egyptian history. Normally shown in art as a mummy with either green or black skin, he holds a crook and flail in his hands, each a symbol of kingship, and wears a bulbous crown with feathered plumes on his head. When a person died, it was Osiris who oversaw their judgement. From his throne, flanked by his sisters Isis and Nephthys, he watched as Anubis weighed the hearts of the dead against the feather of maat, symbol of order, justice, and cosmic balance. If judged worthy, the person entered the afterlife. If not, they were eaten by Ammit, a ferocious beast that was part-crocodile, part-hippo, and part-lion or panther. But it hadn't always been this way for Osiris. Originally, he'd been a beloved king on earth.

> **"AMUN-RE'S PROMINENCE REACHED EVEN GREATER HEIGHTS UNDER THE KINGS OF THE 18TH DYNASTY"**

One day during his reign, Osiris attended a party thrown by his brother Seth. For a game, Seth had brought along a spectacular, ornate chest, and told his guests that whoever fit exactly inside could keep it. Everyone took a turn, but when Osiris lay down, Seth's followers leapt forward, nailed the chest shut, and hurled it into the Nile. Osiris drowned, and the chest was carried by the current all the way to Byblos in Lebanon, where it washed up on a beach and was enveloped by a tree, perhaps thanks to Osiris' regenerative powers. Soon after, while out walking on the beach, the tree caught the eye of the Queen of Byblos. It will make a wonderful column for my palace, she thought, and had it cut down. Meanwhile, Isis left Egypt in search of her husband's body. She tracked the chest to Byblos, where she met members of the queen's entourage and took a job at the palace. Each night, she transformed into a bird and flew around the pillar mourning her husband, until one day, her powers were discovered. Knowing that it was time to leave, she pulled the chest from the tree and returned to Egypt. But this was not the end. Seth found Osiris' corpse, tore him into pieces, and spread the body parts across Egypt. Again, Isis set off on a quest, this time to rebuild her husband's corpse. She found every part except for his phallus, which had been eaten by a Nile fish and had to be replaced. The destruction and healing of Osiris' body is one of many myths that explain the phases of the moon.

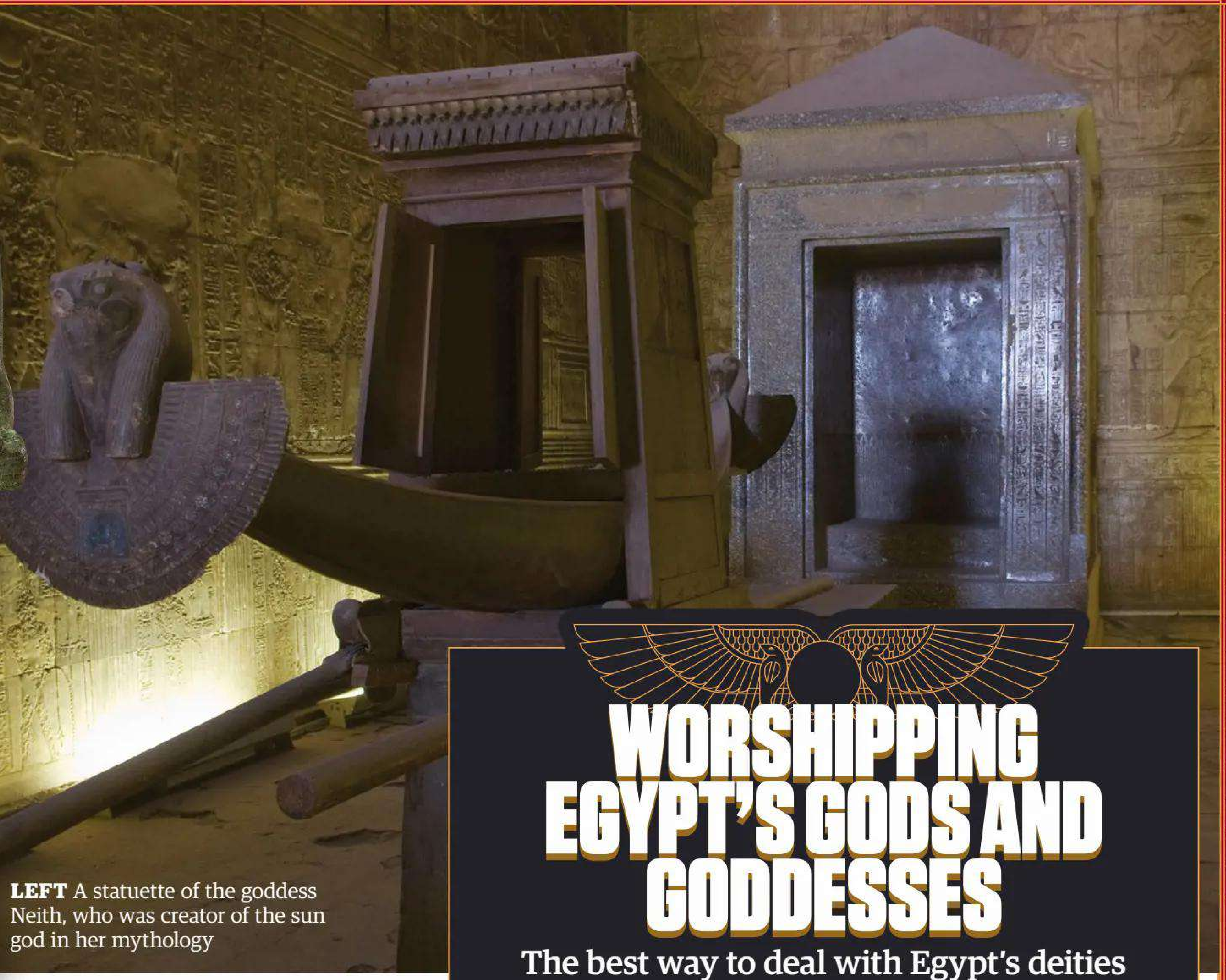
This version of the Osiris myth was recorded by the Greek writer Plutarch in the 2nd century CE, but traces of it can be found in the earliest known myths of Osiris, inscribed on the walls of the Pyramid of Unas at Saqqara over two thousand years earlier. In these texts – which consist of a long list of spells meant to help the dead king reach the afterlife – Osiris' death is not mentioned explicitly, because describing such a chaotic event would invite danger into the king's burial. In one spell, we are told that Seth caused Osiris to fall on his side and that Geb searched for his body. Others say that Seth kicked Osiris, or that Osiris was hurled into water. Isis and Nephthys then searched for the god's body and revived him with magic. There are also references to Osiris being dismembered, to Horus searching for his body parts, and to a trial where Osiris was raised from the underworld to give testimony and in which Seth was sentenced to carry Osiris for eternity. In later myths, Isis resurrects Osiris long enough to conceive their son, Horus, who went on to avenge his father and take Egypt's throne from Seth. Osiris, meanwhile, continued to rule in the afterlife. From then on, each pharaoh reigned as Horus in life, but became Osiris in death.

KING OF THE GODS

So far, the gods we've encountered remained popular for thousands of years – from the beginning of ancient Egyptian history right through to the end. However, this wasn't the case for all of them. The god Amun played very little role in the earliest religious writings from ancient Egypt. At Thebes

RIGHT The gods Osiris (left), Anubis (centre), and Horus (right). Horus wears the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt, usually worn by pharaohs

LEFT A statuette of the goddess Neith, who was creator of the sun god in her mythology



(modern Luxor), an unimportant town for the first thousand years of Egyptian history, Amun was the primary god, representing all that was hidden in the cosmos, while at Hermopolis, he was one of the eight gods of pre-creation. There was nothing to suggest that he would ever become anything more. This situation changed with the start of the Middle Kingdom, around 2000 BCE, when Egypt's new royal family came from Thebes. Under their rule, they expanded Amun's Theban temple and four of the kings were called Amenemhat, meaning 'Amun to the Front'. This royal backing rocketed Amun to the top of the pantheon, and people across Egypt began to worship him. To help further, Amun was fused with the sun god to become Amun-Re, a new all-powerful god that represented all that was hidden and visible in the cosmos.

Amun-Re's prominence reached even greater heights under the kings of the 18th Dynasty (c. 1549-1298 BCE), who also came from Thebes. Amun-Re became king of the gods, and it was the duty of each pharaoh (some called Amenhotep, or 'Amun is Content') to lavish gifts on his temple, often from the spoils of war brought back from empire-expanding campaigns. Kings inscribed their successful deeds on the temple's walls and erected celebratory stelae (inscribed stone slabs) in the grounds. Each expanded the god's temple too, adding courtyards, shrines and columned halls, and made it the focal point of important ritual ▶

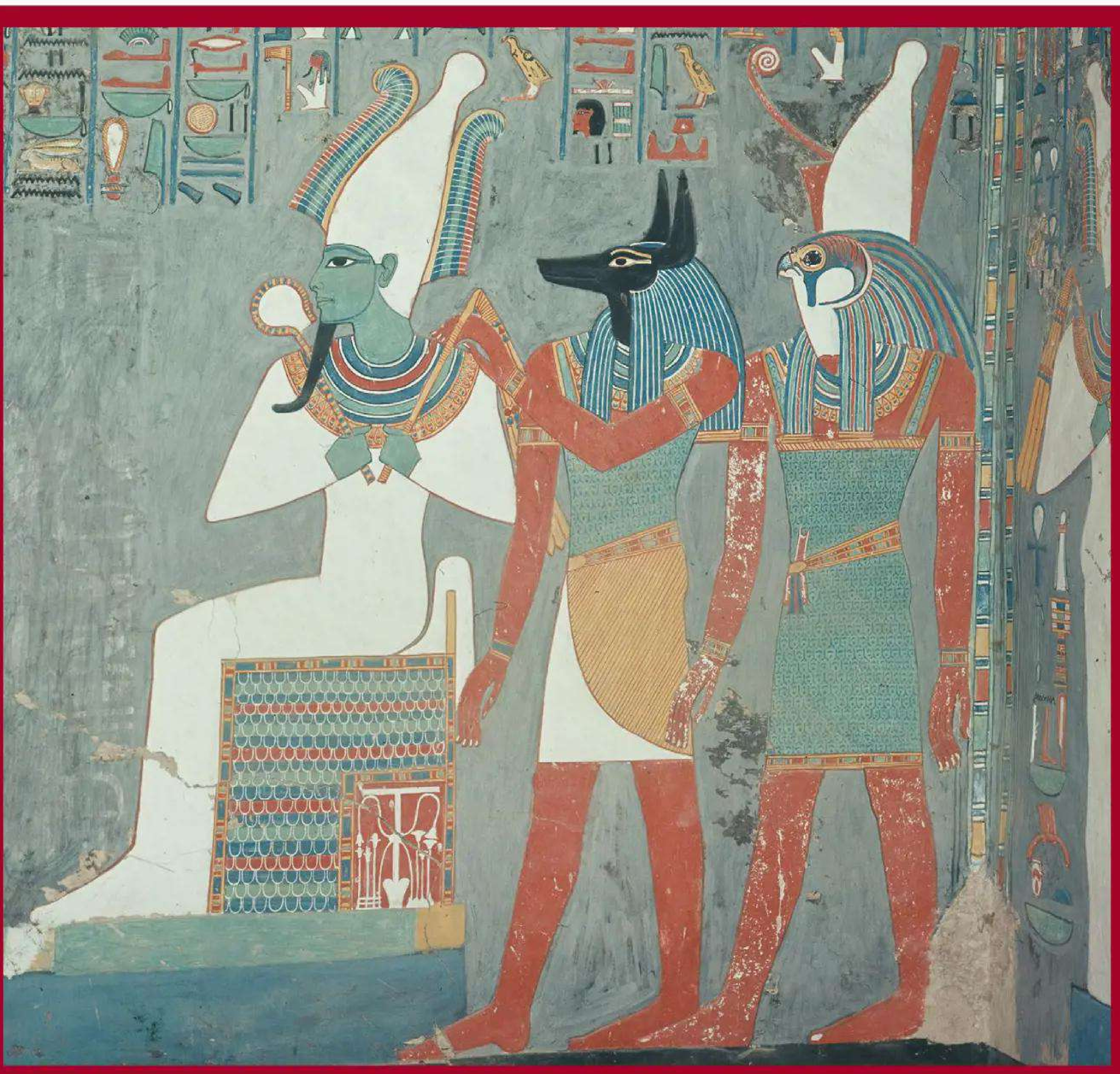
WORSHIPPING EGYPT'S GODS AND GODDESSES

The best way to deal with Egypt's deities was to keep them happy

According to the myths, Egypt's deities existed along with humans, ghosts and demons in the same bubble of creation that floats in the endless waters of Nun. Within this bubble, they had jobs to do, and could help, hinder, or ignore people, depending on their mood. Humanity, after all, was an accident, created from the tears of the sun god when he cried, so they were of little importance in the grand scheme of things. For humans, however, the best approach to living among such powerful beings was to keep them happy. To do this, they built temples that served as earthly palaces for the gods.

In ancient Egypt, priests were known as "god's servants", and there were different ranks and levels of purity required to enter the most sacred areas of a temple. Only the temple's high priest and the king were allowed inside the god's sanctuary to make the offerings of food, drink, incense, and clothing that the god inhabiting the divine statue expected three times per day. These offerings were accompanied by complex age-old rituals that had to be performed correctly. The gods enjoyed order and balance – for things to be done in the exact same manner that they'd been done since the beginning of time – and any mistakes could mean catastrophic consequences for the cosmos.

Ordinary Egyptians were not allowed inside these temples (perhaps with the exception of the first courtyard on special occasions). In fact, the closest that they could get to the divine statues was during festivals, when the statues were placed on portable boats, carried on the shoulders of priests, and taken out of the temple on procession. This gave people the chance to ask "yes" or "no" questions to the gods, with their divine boats dipping forwards or backwards in response.



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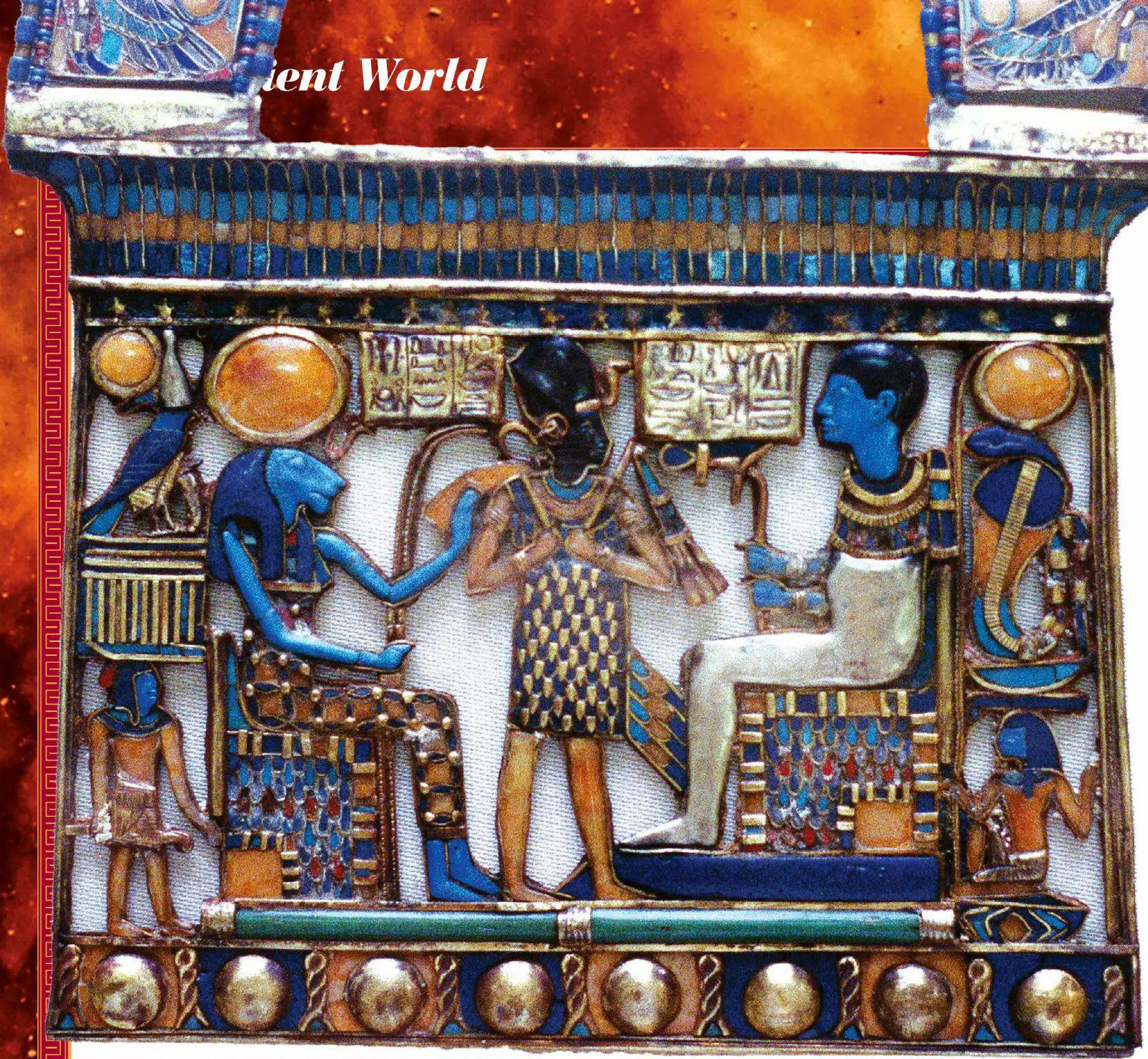
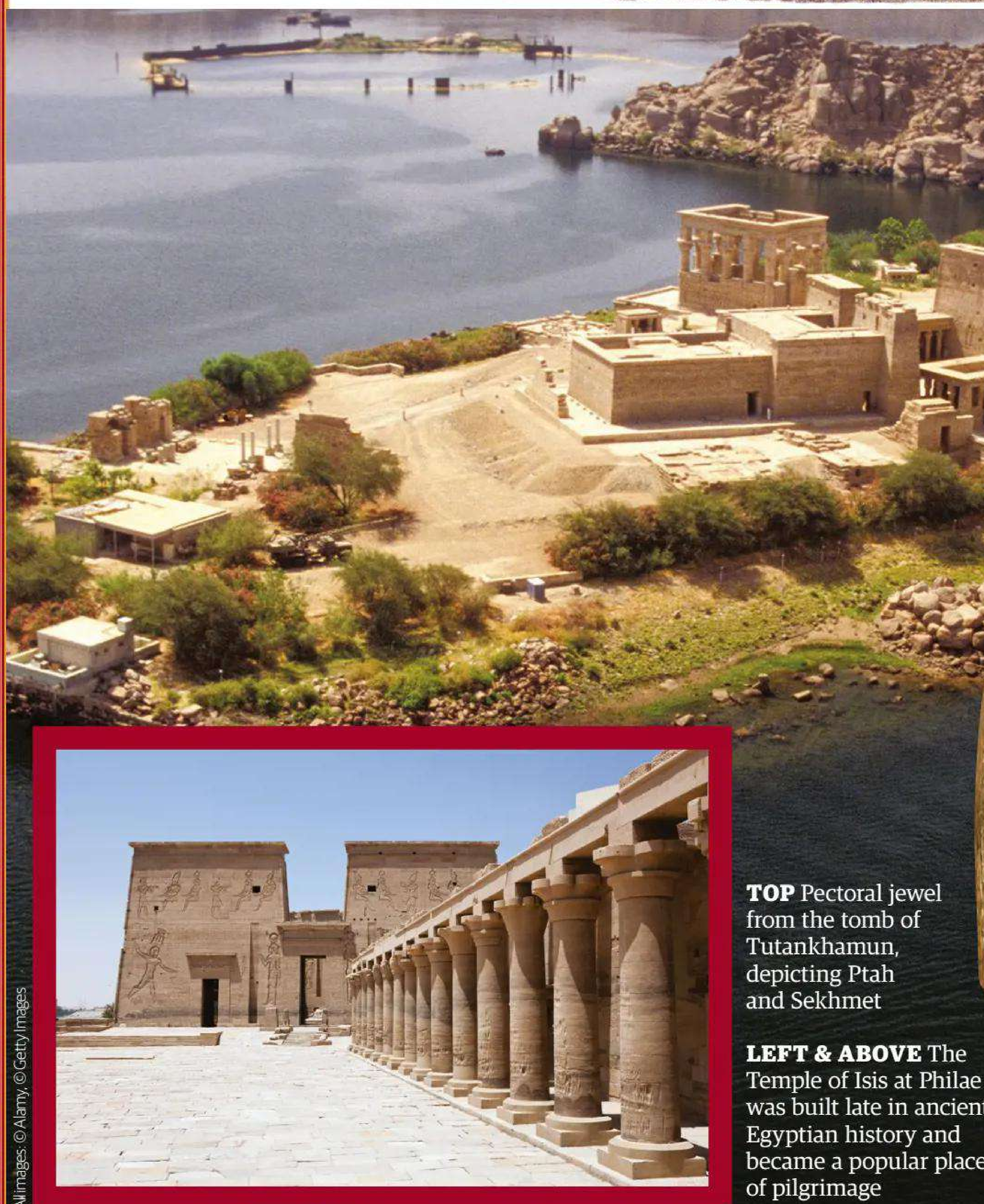


processions around Thebes. Yet despite this new prominence, Amun-Re continued to play little role in mythology beyond being a creator. To the Theban priests, he was now the god that created the Ogdoad, making him older than the pre-creation universe. He was hidden and unknowable, behind everything, and existed beyond even the gods' understanding. According to one hymn, if a person managed to properly comprehend Amun-Re, they died – a good reason not to think too deeply about him.

RISING GODS

After his unexpected rise to the top of the pantheon, Amun-Re dominated Egyptian religion until the end of ancient history. Nonetheless, during the Third Intermediate Period (c. 1069-664 BCE), when Egypt became politically fragmented, and following the country's reunification in the Late Period (664-332 BCE), other gods and goddesses gained prominence. This is because a number of royal dynasties came from different cities in quick succession, and each dynasty raised their preferred deity to a new height. Among them was the city of Bubastis in Egypt's Delta, which was home to the 22nd Dynasty (c. 948-715 BCE) and the cult centre of the cat goddess Bastet. Consequently, it became an important breeding ground for cats. These were killed, mummified, and sold



TOP Pectoral jewel from the tomb of Tutankhamun, depicting Ptah and Sekhmet

LEFT & ABOVE The Temple of Isis at Philae was built late in ancient Egyptian history and became a popular place of pilgrimage

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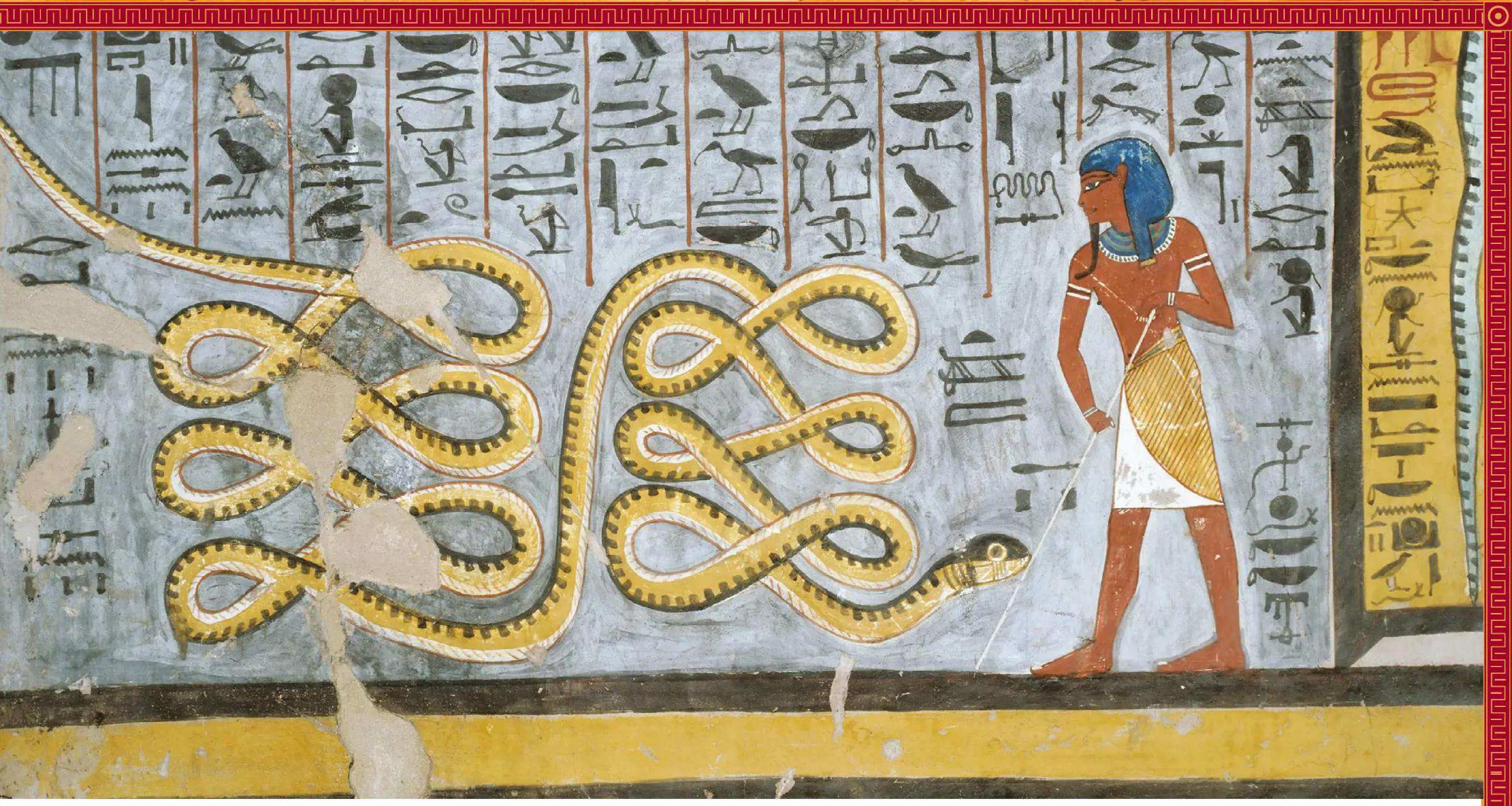
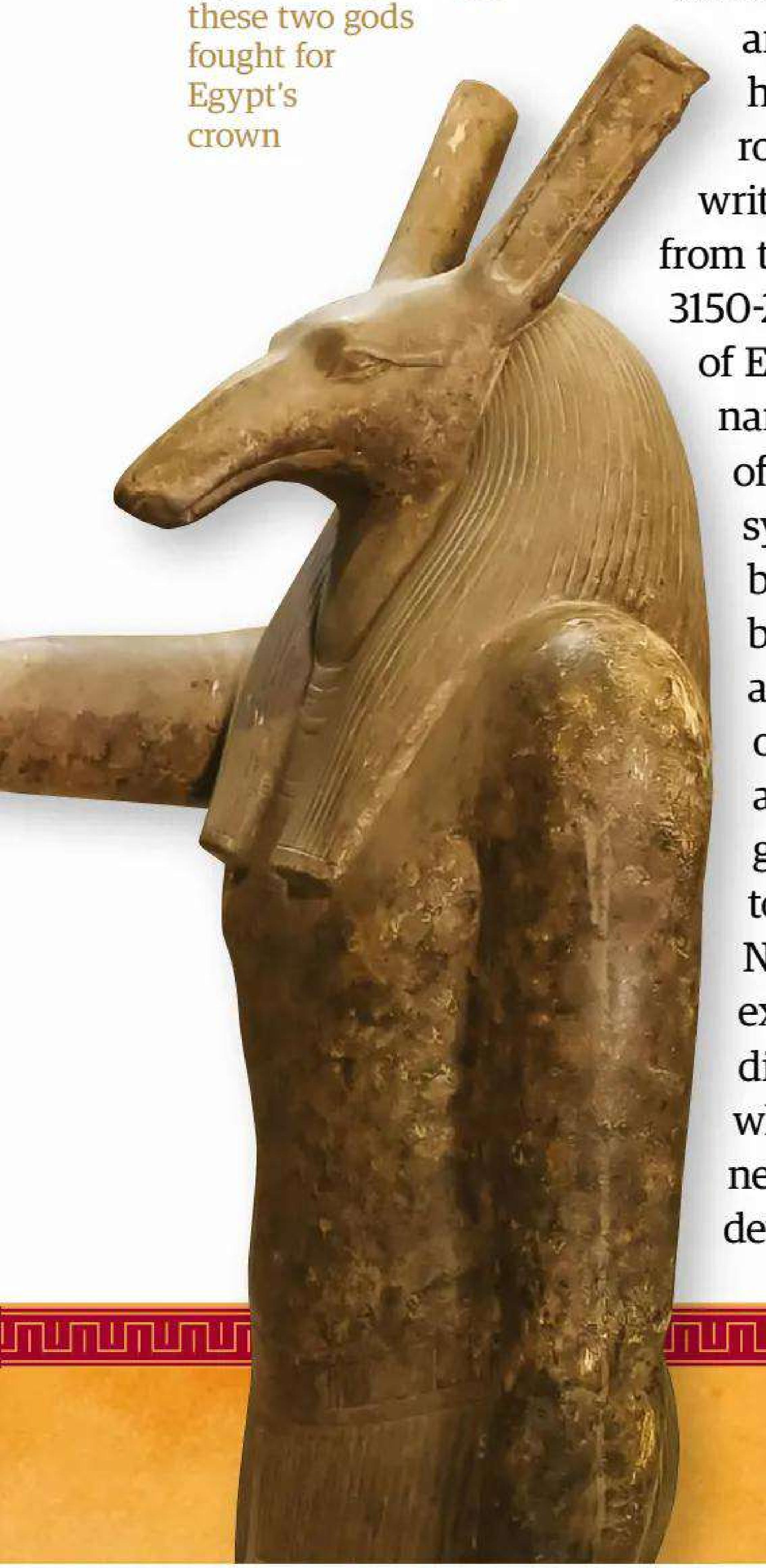


ABOVE The god Atum fights the chaos snake Apophis, nemesis of the sun god, in a scene from the *Book Of Gates* in the Tomb of Ramesses I in the Valley of the Kings

BELOW A statue of Ramesses III, flanked by the gods Horus (left) and Seth (right). In mythology, these two gods fought for Egypt's crown



to pilgrims who, in turn, offered them to the goddess at her temple. Similar practices happened elsewhere, with the mummified creature switched according to the deity's associated animal – dog or jackal mummies were offered to Anubis, and crocodile mummies to Sobek.

The city of Sais, also in the Delta, was home to three of Egypt's later royal dynasties. The prime deity there was Neith, a goddess of warfare, hunting, and weaving, who had a long history but played a secondary role in most myths. The earliest written reference to her comes from the Early Dynastic Period (c. 3150-2584 BCE), at the beginning of Egyptian history, when her name formed part of the names of queens, but her hieroglyphic symbol is known from as far back as the Predynastic Period, before Egypt was unified under a single king. In a myth recorded on the walls of Neith's temple at Esna in southern Egypt, the goddess was the first deity to emerge from the waters of Nun. She spoke everything into existence, from Egypt itself to all divinities, including the sun god, who saw her as his mother. Re's nemesis, the chaos snake Apophis, developed out of her spit. Neith protected the young sun god from Apophis and fought the rebels that emerged from one of the snake's eyes. Once the battle was won, they held a grand celebration of their victory at Sais.

THE GODDESS ISIS

Despite appearing frequently in spells, hymns, and funerary scenes from around 2300 BCE onwards, in general, Isis was not treated with the same importance as Osiris or Horus. She didn't even have her own temples until the Late Period. This all changed in the years following the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE. The world he left behind became destabilised. The future looked uncertain. People moved great distances in search of opportunities to improve their lives, and wherever they settled, hoped to find others who shared their experiences and beliefs.

> **"BECAUSE OF ISIS' NEWFOUND FAME, PILGRIMS FLOCKED TO VISIT HER TEMPLE AT PHILAE"**

As the years passed, merchants, soldiers, and travellers spread the word of Isis. Her mythology connected with ordinary people – she was a mother who had suffered, just like many in these troubled times. As Isis' popularity grew, people built temples to her across Europe. One stood in London, one in Mainz, another in Pompeii. Wherever a devotee travelled or settled, they could find like-minded Isis worshippers, a ready-made community in an increasingly cold world.

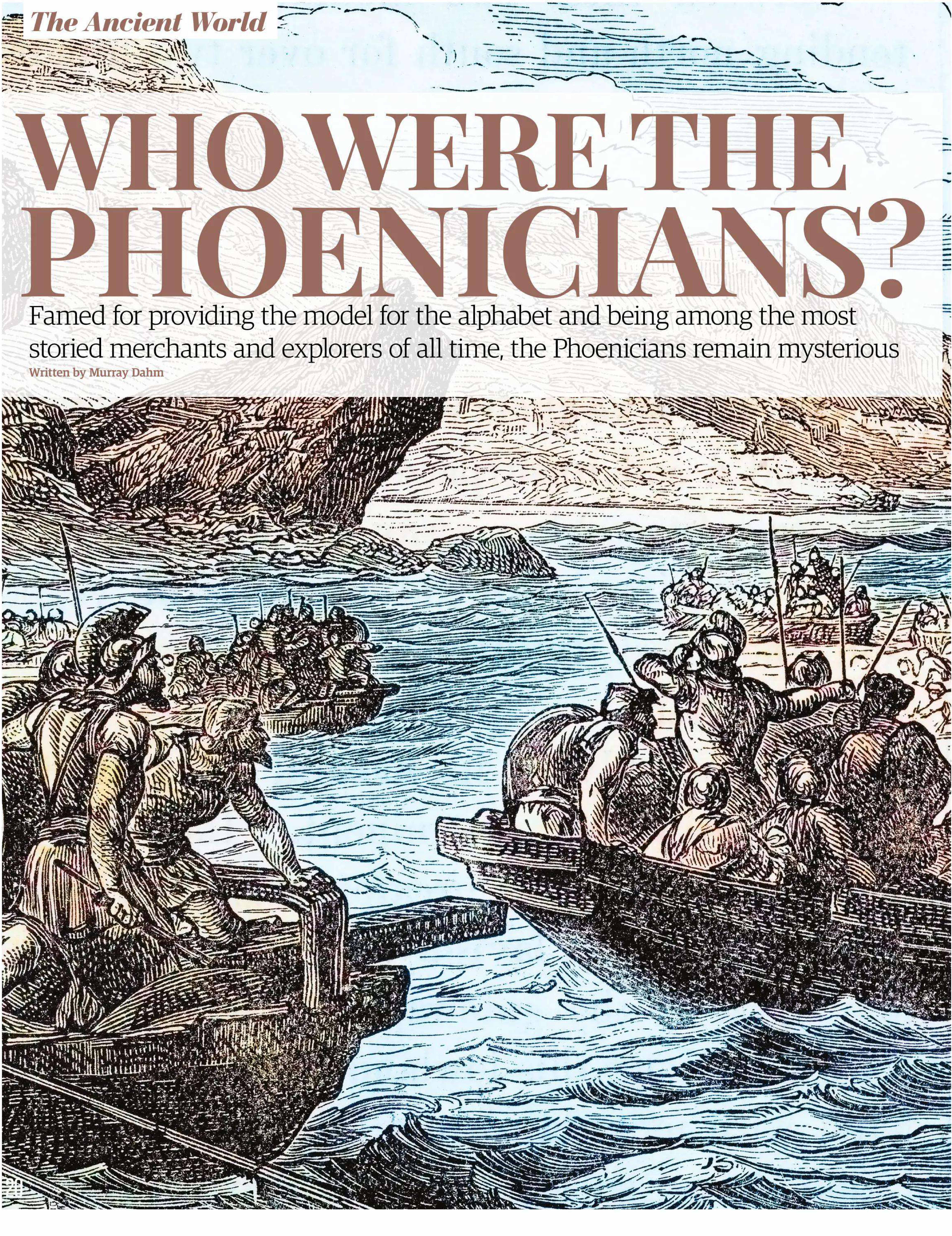
Because of Isis' newfound fame, pilgrims flocked to visit her temple at Philae in southern Egypt, which was primarily built around 332-30 BCE, under the Ptolemaic Dynasty, who ruled the country after Alexander's invasion. But this new cult of Isis differed from traditional Egyptian religion. Now, Isis was all powerful in the pantheon. She invented writings and laws, and all goddesses were simply manifestations of her power. According to inscriptions at Philae, she led the Ennead of Heliopolis and was responsible for the Nile flood – a role normally assigned to the god Hapy. She destroyed Egypt's enemies, and defeated the chaos snake Apophis. Indeed, her cult was so popular that her temple at Philae was the last temple in Egypt to close, by order of the eastern Roman Emperor Justinian in around 537 CE.

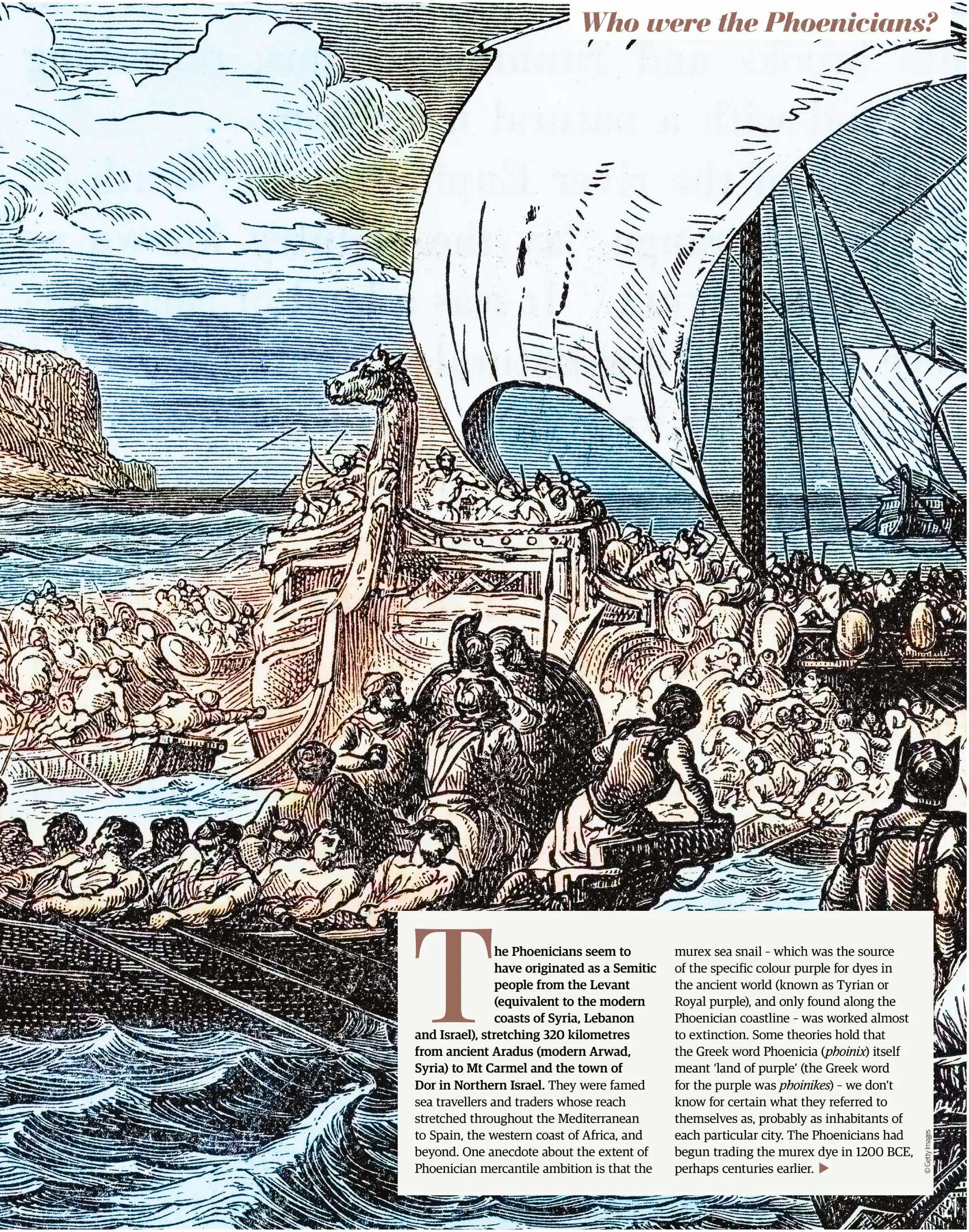
Ultimately, then, Isis didn't just take the sun god's secret name, she replaced him, and went on to become the last of Egypt's deities – cosmic forces that had served to explain the workings of our universe for thousands of years.

WHO WERE THE PHOENICIANS?

Famed for providing the model for the alphabet and being among the most storied merchants and explorers of all time, the Phoenicians remain mysterious

Written by Murray Dahm





The Phoenicians seem to have originated as a Semitic people from the Levant (equivalent to the modern coasts of Syria, Lebanon and Israel), stretching 320 kilometres from ancient Aradus (modern Arwad, Syria) to Mt Carmel and the town of Dor in Northern Israel. They were famed sea travellers and traders whose reach stretched throughout the Mediterranean to Spain, the western coast of Africa, and beyond. One anecdote about the extent of Phoenician mercantile ambition is that the murex sea snail – which was the source of the specific colour purple for dyes in the ancient world (known as Tyrian or Royal purple), and only found along the Phoenician coastline – was worked almost to extinction. Some theories hold that the Greek word Phoenicia (*phoinix*) itself meant 'land of purple' (the Greek word for the purple was *phoinikes*) – we don't know for certain what they referred to themselves as, probably as inhabitants of each particular city. The Phoenicians had begun trading the murex dye in 1200 BCE, perhaps centuries earlier. ▶

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The Age of the Phoenicians is usually dated between around 1200 and 550 BCE, although Phoenician influence lasted into the 2nd century BCE. From around 550 BCE, however, Carthaginian civilisation took over as the dominant influence, especially in the western Mediterranean. Carthage was the most famous Phoenician colony (most matters related to the Carthaginians continued to be known as Poeni or Punic after their Phoenician origins – such as the various Punic wars fought with Rome).

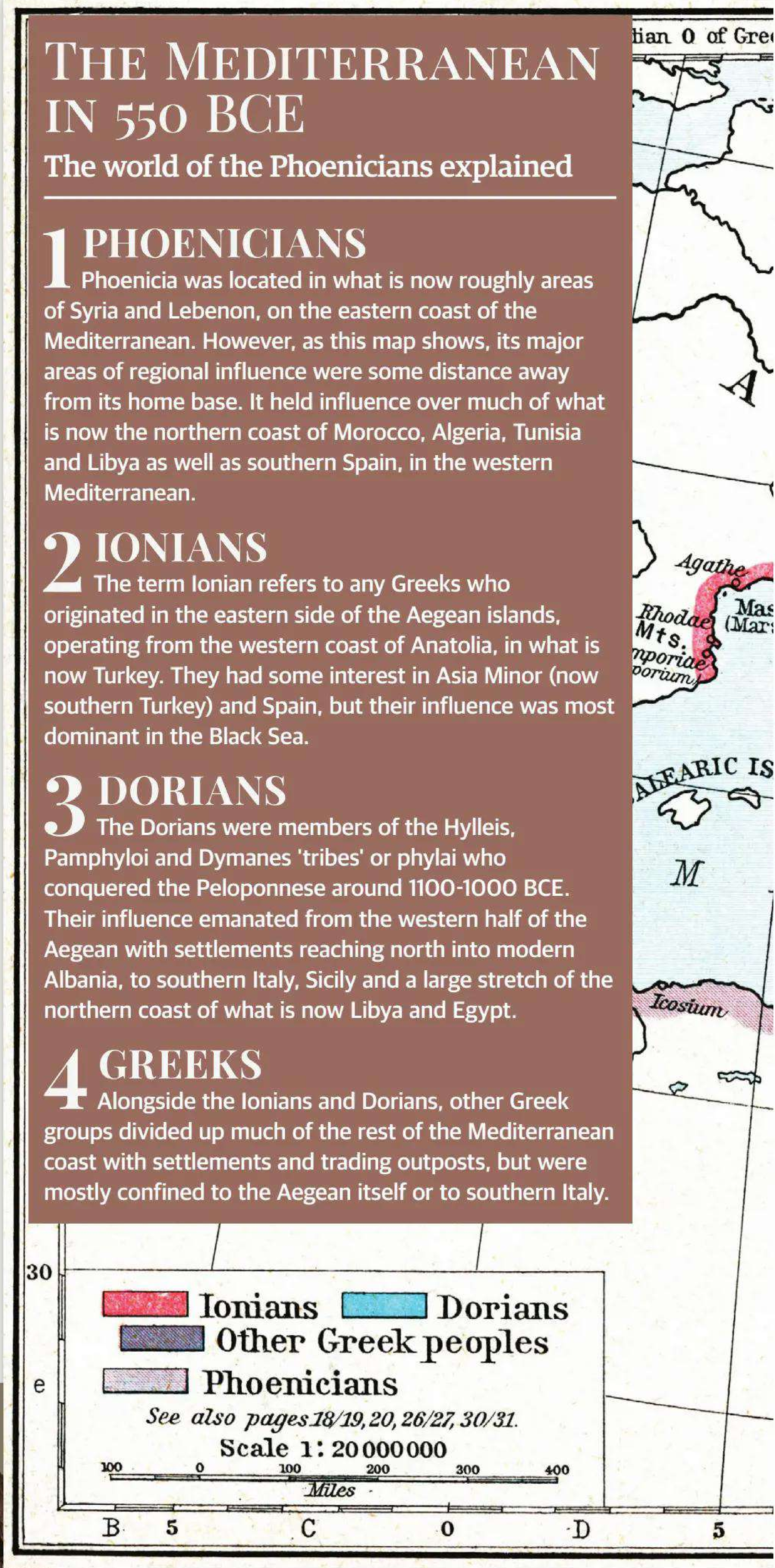
Along with trade in coveted luxury items, the Phoenicians were in demand as seamen and they also spread their knowledge of seamanship, navigation and (perhaps most importantly) the alphabet. This, obviously useful, mode of common communication between traders set up letter forms in various alphabets still obvious today (such as in the Greek and Latin alphabets) but also conventions such as reading right-to-left and horizontal text. It was also a purely alphabetic script (with 22 characters) rather than a pictographic or hieroglyphic script where symbols could represent ideas or things. The Phoenician alphabet (developed around 1050 BCE) did not represent vowels, however, only consonants so in modern terms is an abjad or abgad – where vowels are implicit or inferred. It was soon adopted by the cultures the Phoenicians came into contact with, such as the Greeks. Although the term alphabet comes from the first two letters of the Greek alphabet (*alpha* and *beta*), it is obvious that that order came itself from Phoenician where the first letters were *alep*, *bet*, *giml*, *dalt* – the first four letters in many derivative alphabets ('c' took the place of 'g' in alphabets from the 3rd century BCE onwards).

> "The Phoenicians spread their knowledge of seamanship, navigation and the alphabet"

In seafaring terms, the Phoenicians may also have been the first to develop the keel, and the bireme (a ship with two banks of oars) in around 700 BCE – an innovation from earlier designs of ship which only had one bank of oars. They are also credited with the invention of the trireme (three banks of oars) – according to Clement of Alexandria invented by the Sidonians. The trireme came to dominate naval warfare for more than 500 years.

ORIGINS

The origins of the Phoenicians stretch back to around 3000 BCE, and they may have been part of the older indigenous Canaanite civilisation – although they soon became distinct and were regarded, and regarded themselves, as such. Exactly where the distinctions lie within terms like Phoenicians, Canaanites and the various biblical peoples is still a matter of debate. The Greek historian Herodotus, writing in the 5th century BCE, refers to all people of the area (which he broadly identifies as Palestine) as Syrians, Arabs or Phoenicians only and makes no further distinctions – he, therefore, identifies ancient Judeans as Phoenicians although many others do not. What we identify as Phoenician culture came into being in around the 12th century BCE. This corresponded to the period when previously dominant Late Bronze Age cultures (such as Mycenaean Greece and Minoan Crete) collapsed. This was due to various factors and, for the land which would become Phoenicia, the most important collapse was that of the Hittite Empire which had, at its height, covered most of Anatolia from the Black



THE MEDITERRANEAN IN 550 BCE

The world of the Phoenicians explained

1 PHOENICIANS

Phoenicia was located in what is now roughly areas of Syria and Lebenon, on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. However, as this map shows, its major areas of regional influence were some distance away from its home base. It held influence over much of what is now the northern coast of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya as well as southern Spain, in the western Mediterranean.

2 IONIANS

The term Ionian refers to any Greeks who originated in the eastern side of the Aegean islands, operating from the western coast of Anatolia, in what is now Turkey. They had some interest in Asia Minor (now southern Turkey) and Spain, but their influence was most dominant in the Black Sea.

3 DORIANS

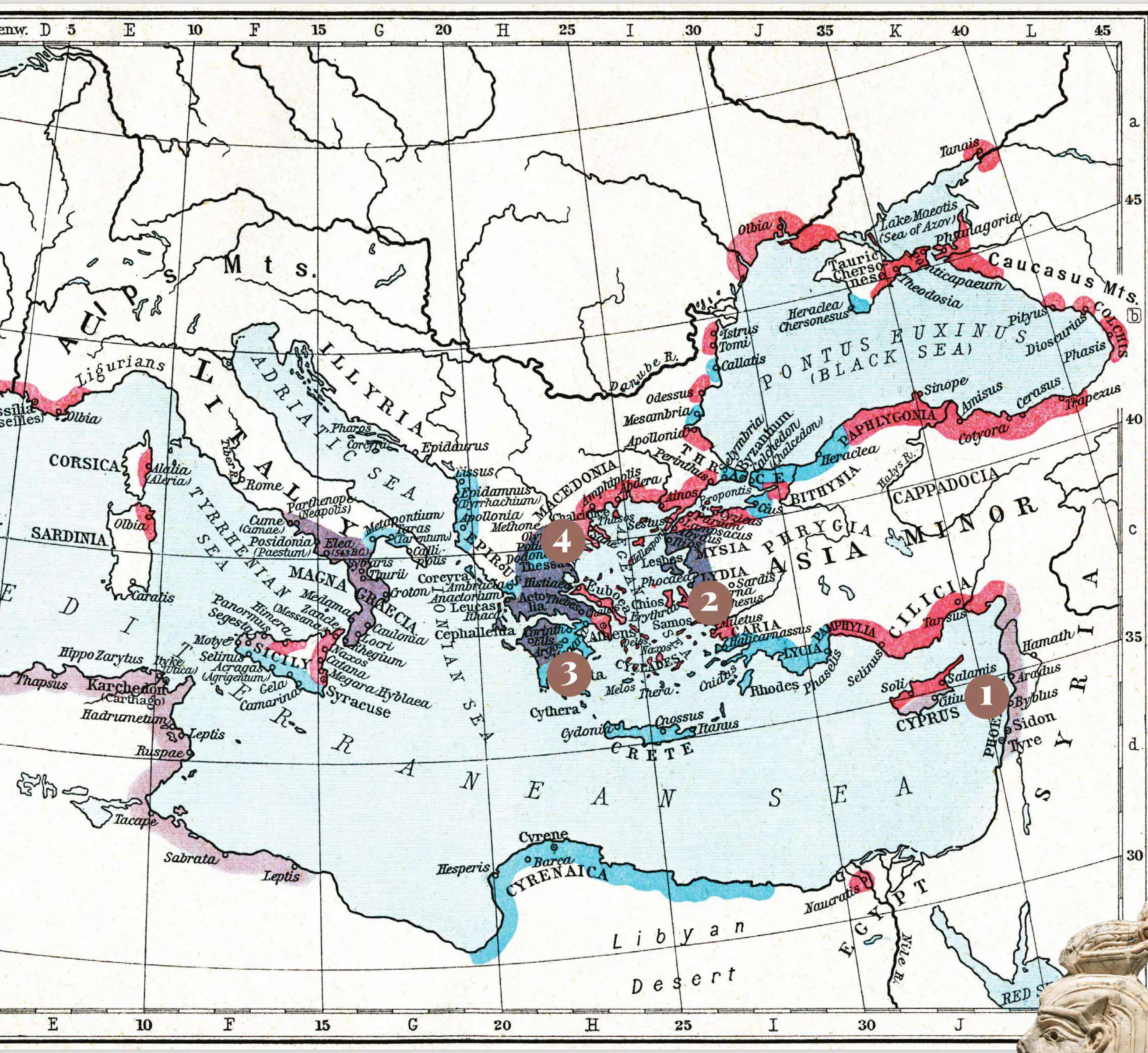
The Dorians were members of the Hylleis, Pamphyloi and Dymanes 'tribes' or phylai who conquered the Peloponnese around 1100-1000 BCE. Their influence emanated from the western half of the Aegean with settlements reaching north into modern Albania, to southern Italy, Sicily and a large stretch of the northern coast of what is now Libya and Egypt.

4 GREEKS

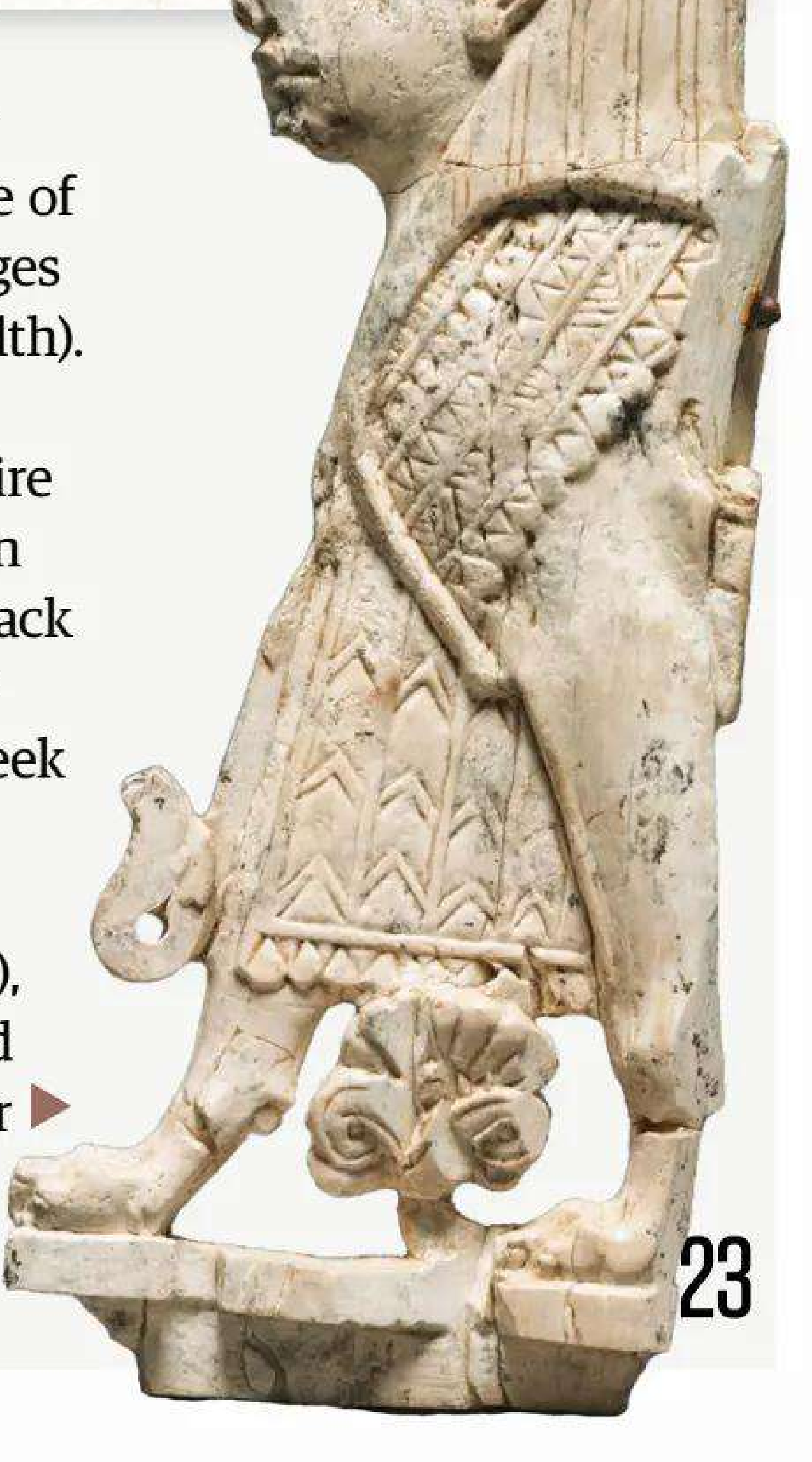
Alongside the Ionians and Dorians, other Greek groups divided up much of the rest of the Mediterranean coast with settlements and trading outposts, but were mostly confined to the Aegean itself or to southern Italy.

LEFT-INSET A Phoenician glass bead depicting a bearded face. Phoenicia was a centre of glass making and glass-making technology

LEFT Relief of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III showing his attack on a Phoenician city


1
2
3
4
Alps Mts.
Ligurians
ITALY
ILLYRIA
ADRIATIC SEA
TYRRHENIAN SEA
IONIAN SEA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
CORSICA
SARDINIA
SICILY
MAGNA GRAECIA
Massilia (Marseilles)
Olbia
Alalia (Aleria)
Rome
Parthenope (Neapolis)
Cumae
Posidonia (Paestum)
Elea
Metapontium
Taras (Tarentum)
Sybaris
Thurii
Croton
Caulonia
Locri
Rhegium
Messana
Zancle
Himera
Panormus
Segesta
Motye
Selinus
Acragas (Agrigentum)
Gela
Camarina
Syracuse
Megara Hyblaea
Catana
Naxos
Caralis
Hippo Zarytus
Utica
Karchedon (Carthago)
Thapsus
Hadrumetum
Leptis
Ruspae
Tacape
Sabrata
Leptis
Epidamnus (Dyrrhachium)
Apollonia
Epidaurus
Pharos
Corcyra
Lissus
EPIRUS
Corcyra
Ambracia
Anactorium
Leucas
Ithaca
Cephallenia
MACEDONIA
Chalcidice
Amphipolis
Abdera
Thasos
Methone
Olynthus
Thessaly
Aetolia
Histiaea
Euboea
Thebes
Chalcis
Corinth
Elis
Argos
Athens
Sparta
Cythera
Cyclades
Melos
Thera
Naxos
Delos
Crete
Cydonia
Cnossus
Itanus
AEGEAN SEA
Lesbos
Chios
Samos
Phocaea
Erythrae
Smyrna
Ephesus
Miletus
Sardis
CARIA
Halicarnassus
Cnidus
Rhodes
LYCIA
Phaselis
PAMPHYLIA
CILICIA
Tarsus
Selinus
Soli
Salamis
Citium
CYPRUS
ASIA MINOR
PHRYGIA
MYSIA
LYDIA
BITHYNIA
CAPPADOCIA
PAPHLYGONIA
Halys R.
Heraclea
Propontis
Cyzicus
Lampsacus
Sestus
Hellespont
Perinthus
Selymbria
Byzantium
Calchedon (Chalcedon)
THRACE
Ainos
Apollonia
Mesambria
Odessus
Callatis
Tomi
Istrus
Danube R.
Olbia
PONTUS EUXINUS (BLACK SEA)
Heraclea Chersonesus
Tauric Chersonese
Theodosia
Panticapaeum
Phanagoria
Lake Maeotis (Sea of Azov)
Tanais
Caucasus Mts.
COLCHIS
Dioscurias
Pityus
Phasis
Trapezus
Cerasus
Cotyora
Amisus
Sinope
Hamath
Aradus
Byblus
Sidon
Tyre
PHOENICIA
SYRIA
EGYPT
Naucratis
Nile R.
Cyrene
Barca
Hesperis
CYRENAICA
Libyan Desert
RED SEA

Sea as far south as Byblos (modern Jebeil, Lebanon). Byblos was a city that would become an important Phoenician centre along with Sidon (modern Saida, Lebanon) and Tyre and, later, Aradus (Arwad, Syria). It was from Byblos that the Phoenicians traded papyrus from Egypt and gold from Nubia. Byblos was also an important centre for tin (essential for the creation of bronze – Byblos was also known for its bronze making) and lapis lazuli – sourced, ultimately, from Afghanistan. With the collapse of the Hittite Empire in the 13th century BCE, this created a power vacuum into which various states emerged (perhaps around 1230 BCE). We have evidence of the Hittites conquering the cities of Phoenicia in the 14th century BCE. Several of these were what became known as Phoenicia. Phoenicia was never, however, a single unified state. Rather, it was a collection of city states that were identified as homogeneous (they shared a language and culture) and distinct from other cultures in the area. This distinction was perhaps based on trade (although, as Herodotus shows, other distinctions were possible). Few Phoenician sources survive so we rely on outsiders (like Herodotus and other Greek writers) looking in. Each city had its own government – usually monarchies, although there is evidence of other systems too (such as priests, judges – *sufetes*, councils, even a commonwealth). These communities had also existed prior to the collapse of the Hittite empire – the earliest evidence of trade between Phoenicians and Minoan Crete dates back to the 15th century BCE at least. Other societies, Egyptian and Mycenaean Greek also have surviving inscriptions that refer to Phoenicia or Phoenicians. One inscription (the Honeyman Inscription), perhaps dating to around 900 BCE and found in Cyprus in the 1930s may refer ▶



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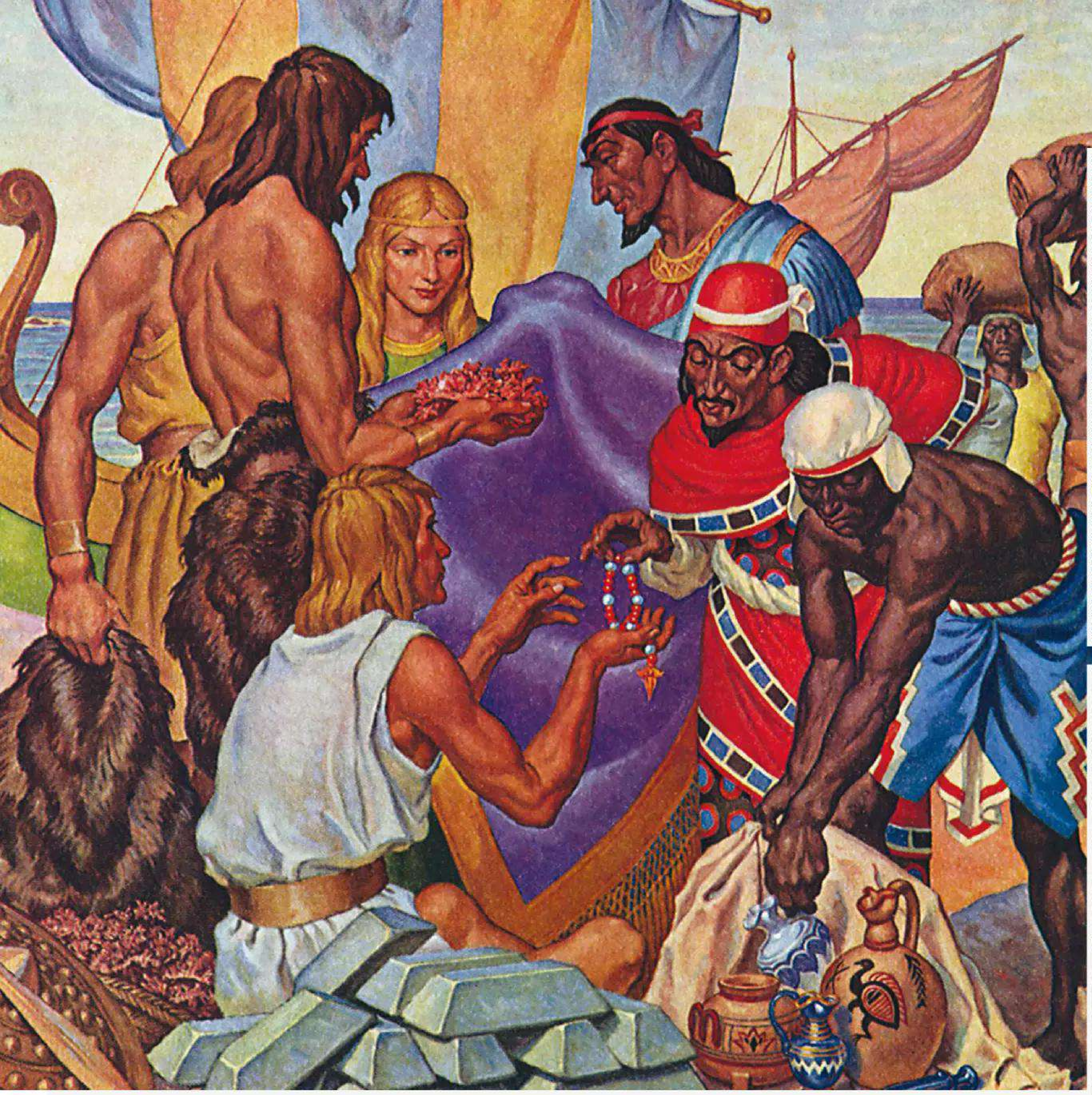
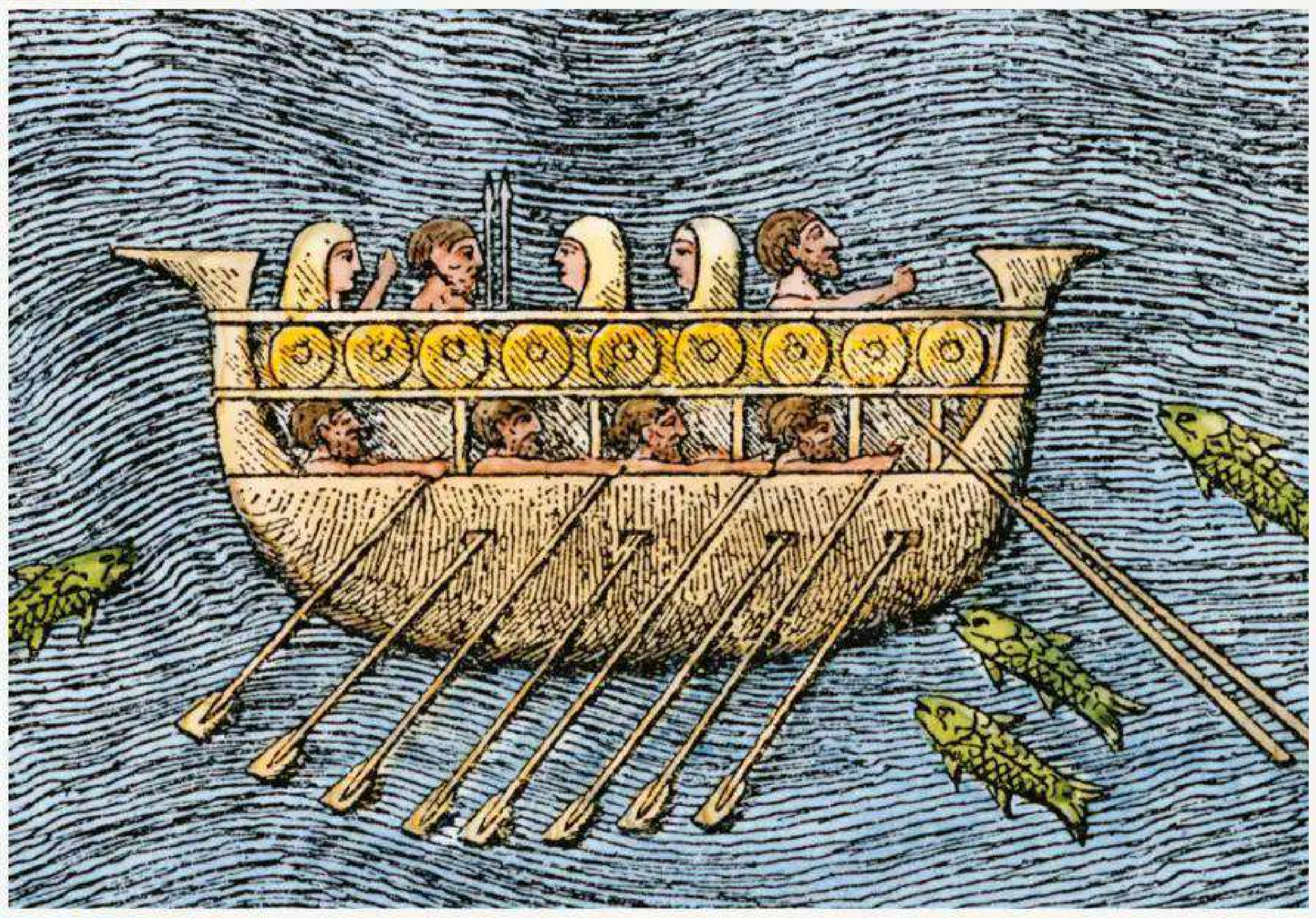




to Phoenicia as a whole as the land of “Put”, but this interpretation remains controversial (and solitary). Replacing Sidon, Tyre became the most dominant Phoenician city in the 10th century BCE and (unusually) set out to conquer the other Phoenician states – this was not the normal pattern and, for the most part, Phoenician cities competed for influence and commercial dominance side by side in a less aggressive manner. Many of the colonies established by the Phoenicians are considered to have been done so peacefully rather than by conquest.

TRADE

From the cities and ports that came to be identified as Phoenician, the inhabitants began to develop and expand an extensive maritime trade network (sometimes even referred to as a thalassocracy – a maritime empire). Their networks included the entire coast of North Africa, even beyond the Pillars of Heracles (the Straits of Gibraltar) – perhaps to the Canary Islands and Britain, as well as Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica, the Mediterranean and Atlantic coasts of Spain, and the Balearic Islands. They also traded northwards along the southern Anatolian coast including Cyprus and Crete, and they may even have traded into the Aegean Sea and southern Black Sea region.

In addition to Carthage (founded traditionally in 814 BCE by Queen Dido, and originally from Tyre – the name in Phoenician, *Qart-Hadast*, means “new town”), there were other important Phoenician colonies. These were usually established to be largely autonomous but were expected to pay tribute to their ‘home’ city. Tingi (originally Tyng, now modern Tangier, Morocco) was founded by the Phoenicians in the 10th century BCE – the name might relate to its location on high ground. Gadir (modern Cádiz, Spain) was founded perhaps in 1100 BCE although no evidence has been found dating to earlier than the 9th century BCE; the name in Phoenician meant “wall,” “compound” or, perhaps, “stronghold.” Dominance of many of the western Mediterranean Phoenician colonies were subsequently taken over by Carthage as she expanded her own influence and empire from the 7th century onwards. Other important Phoenician colonies included Leptis Magna (perhaps originally Lpq or Lpqy, now Khoms, Libya), founded in the 7th century BCE, and other places along the North African coast. Colonies were also established on Cyprus (Citium), Sicily (Motye, Panormus), Sardinia (Tharras, Sulci, Nora, Caralis) and on the Balearic Islands (Ibossim – the modern town of Ibiza).

ABOVE-LEFT Trade was how the Phoenicians expanded their sphere of influence

TOP A woodcut of a Phoenician trading galley travelling to sell its goods

ABOVE Phoenicians offering tribute to the Persian king from reliefs at the palace at Persepolis

In addition to local items such as the murex dyes, another mainstay of Phoenician trade was from the extensive local cedarwood forests, which provided wood that was in great demand throughout Egypt and Mesopotamia (the cedar tree still graces the national flag of Lebanon). Egyptian hieroglyphs (from the 15th century BCE onwards) refer to Phoenicia as “carpenters” (*fenekhu*) perhaps referring to it as one of the most important sources of useable wood for Egyptian construction.

In addition to producing their renowned dye, Phoenician cities also became famous for their own textiles dyed with it. These colourful fabrics are even mentioned in Homer’s epic poem the *Iliad*. The Phoenicians also traded wine and extensive kilns have been discovered for making pottery to transport such products. Indeed, some credit the Phoenicians with the invention of the amphora itself, used for transporting wine and all sorts of liquids for centuries thereafter. Wine-making may even have spread from Phoenicia to other parts of the Mediterranean (although most cultures

– such as the Greeks and Romans – had alternative, usually divine, explanations of where the technology for making wine had originated). Phoenician colonies in North Africa, Sicily, France and Spain all had associated wine-making facilities. The remains of a Phoenician trading ship with 50 amphorae of wine was found off Gozo, Malta, in 2014 – one of the oldest Mediterranean shipwrecks (other Phoenician shipwrecks that provide evidence of the wine trade were found in Israel in 1997).

Olive oil exports and trade were also a staple of Phoenician connections and Phoenicia may also have been responsible for spreading glass-making technologies and innovations throughout the Mediterranean; Phoenicia was the glass-making centre of the Mediterranean. These items were all indigenous but, as the lapis lazuli, gold and papyrus trade shows, Phoenician cities also traded in goods from elsewhere – it seems they had the networks to allow such goods to be traded far afield. Silver from Spain and Sardinia has been found in the 'home' cities of Phoenicia revealing this was a multi-directional system. The tin used in Byblos may have even been sourced in Cornwall.

DECLINE

Phoenicia began to decline in influence from the time of the Assyrian invasions in 858 BCE onwards, although the peoples are still identified in our sources (especially Greek ones) as Phoenician for some considerable time. The culture and trade contacts were also valued by their new overlords and the cities of Phoenicia were allowed some autonomy for many years – they continued to trade and send out colonising expeditions. Assyrian control was tightened in the 8th century BCE and the major cities of Phoenicia rebelled from Assyrian rule. In response, they were put under siege, taken and suppressed. Many of the Phoenician colonies (especially Carthage) soon became strong enough to survive and thrive on their own.

With the collapse of the Assyrian Empire and its replacement by the Babylonian Empire, the cities of Phoenicia continued to try and assert their independence – Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre for 13 years (c.587-574 BCE). In turn, the Babylonians were themselves conquered by the Achaemenid Persians and the cities of Phoenicia yielded to Cyrus the Great, and he granted them a great deal of autonomy once more. He also divided them into four vassal kingdoms (each owing tribute to Persia). These were centred on Arwad, Byblos, Sidon and Tyre.

The Phoenicians were highly prized by the Persian kings for their prowess in seamanship – they provided most of the ships in the Persian Mediterranean fleets. Sidon rebelled (independently) from Persian rule in the mid-4th century BCE – as punishment, the Persian king Artaxerxes III destroyed the city. Tyre then became the most dominant city in the region once again and it was for this reason Alexander the Great ensured that he took the city in a seven-month siege in 332 BCE. The destruction Alexander visited on Tyre (crucifying 2,000 and selling 30,000 into slavery) ensured the other cities of Phoenicia quickly surrendered.

With the death of Alexander in 323 BCE, the Phoenician cities fell under Seleucid rule (Seleucus was one of Alexander's commanders who inherited part of the empire). The lands of the Levant soon became the contested territory between the Seleucids and Ptolemaic Egypt. The Phoenician cities remained self-governing and maintained their trade contacts with colonies in the western Mediterranean but, as the focus of dynastic wars, the cities fell to various belligerents and the cities ceased to be regarded as Phoenician from the mid-2nd century BCE onwards. They were now considered cities of one or another of the empires that controlled them – Seleucid, Ptolemaic, or Armenian – when the Armenian empire took over the region in the 80s BCE. The whole region was then taken over by Rome systematically from the 60s BCE and incorporated into the Roman province of Syria. In a way, the cities of Phoenicia therefore outlasted their most famous colony, Carthage, which had dominated the western Mediterranean (and may even have circumnavigated Africa around 500 BCE) and become a powerful empire in its own right. This brought it into conflict with Rome and a series of wars were fought (from 264-146 BCE) that saw Rome emerge victorious and Carthage was destroyed – its former territories falling to Roman control.

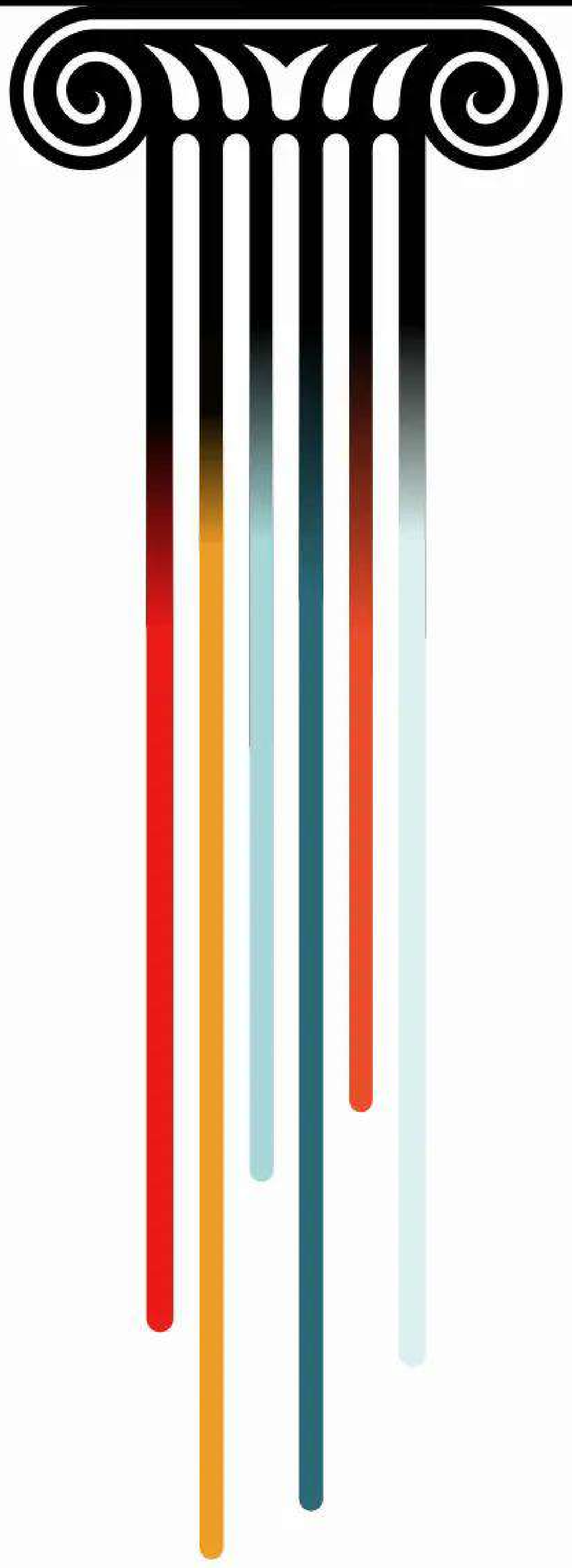
> "The destruction Alexander visited on Tyre ensured the other cities of Phoenicia quickly surrendered"

BELOW Two Phoenician sarcophagi from Cádiz, Spain, probably imported from Sidon and showing the continuing connections with Phoenician 'home' cities

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

Queen Dido

Founder of Carthage

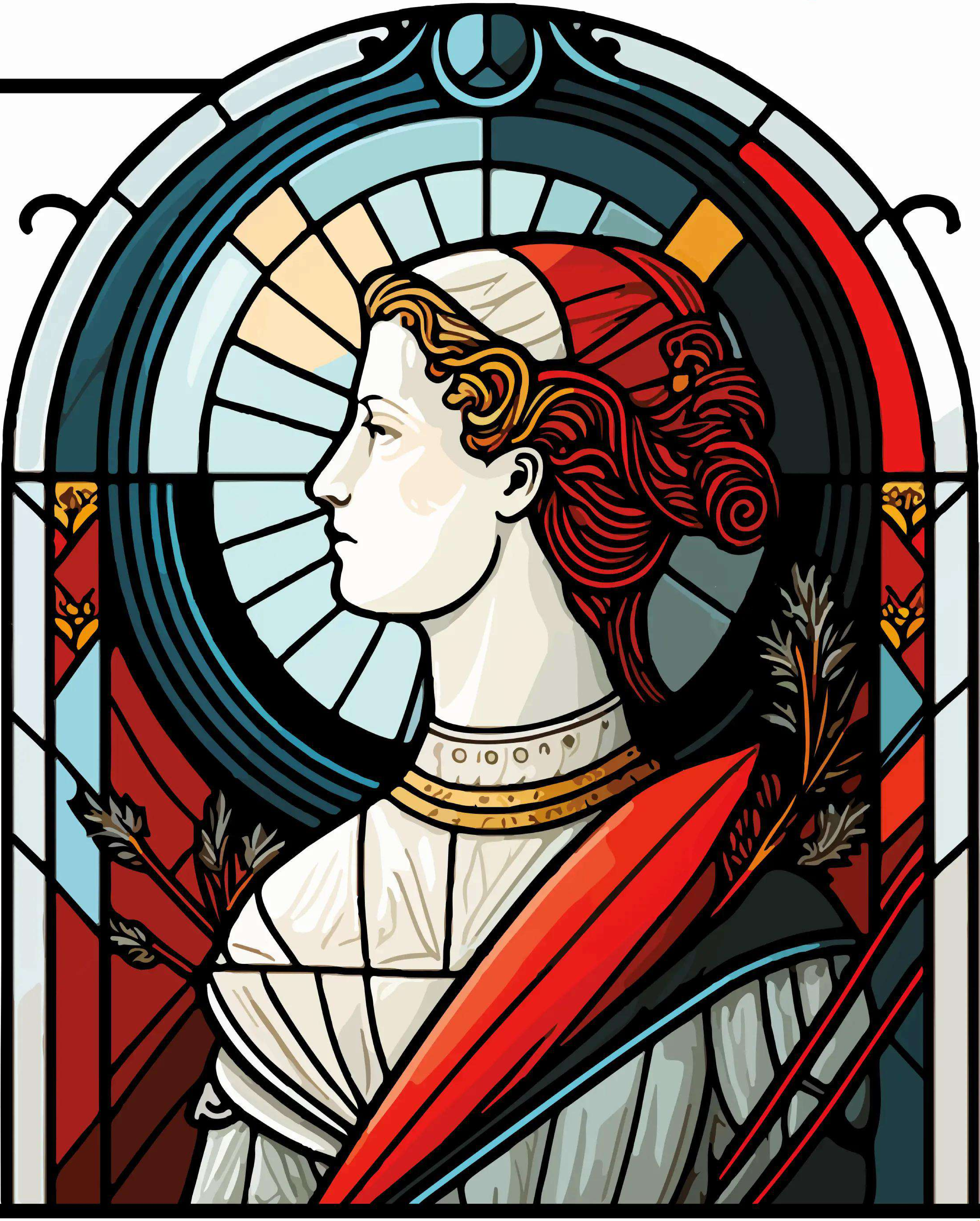


Honoured by Rome and Greece, what do we know of this semi-mythical woman?

Written by Catherine Curzon

As founder and queen of Carthage, Dido's name has survived the ages as a myth. Deity to some, historical reality to others, she has been further immortalised in literature, most famously in Virgil's *Aeneid* as the woman who gave her life for one of the founding heroes of Rome. In this epic poem, written between 29 and 19 BCE, Aeneas encounters Dido, queen of Carthage, a city-state that will one day rival Rome itself. She is a central yet fictionalised figure in this story, killing herself for the love of its hero and dooming the powerful city that she founded. It is little wonder that Dido's tale has long fascinated scholars, who continue their investigations into whether this remarkable woman was flesh and blood or myth and legend.

Dido's name has appeared in writings since ancient times, the oldest known occurrence being in the writings of Timaeus, a 3rd-century BCE Greek historian. These stories are lost today, as is the work of Roman historian Pompeius Trogus, who wrote his own version of Dido's story around a century later. However, Trogus' tale was summarised by a fellow Roman, Justin, and it is his treatment along with Virgil's epic poem that offers tantalising clues to the identity of Dido. ▶



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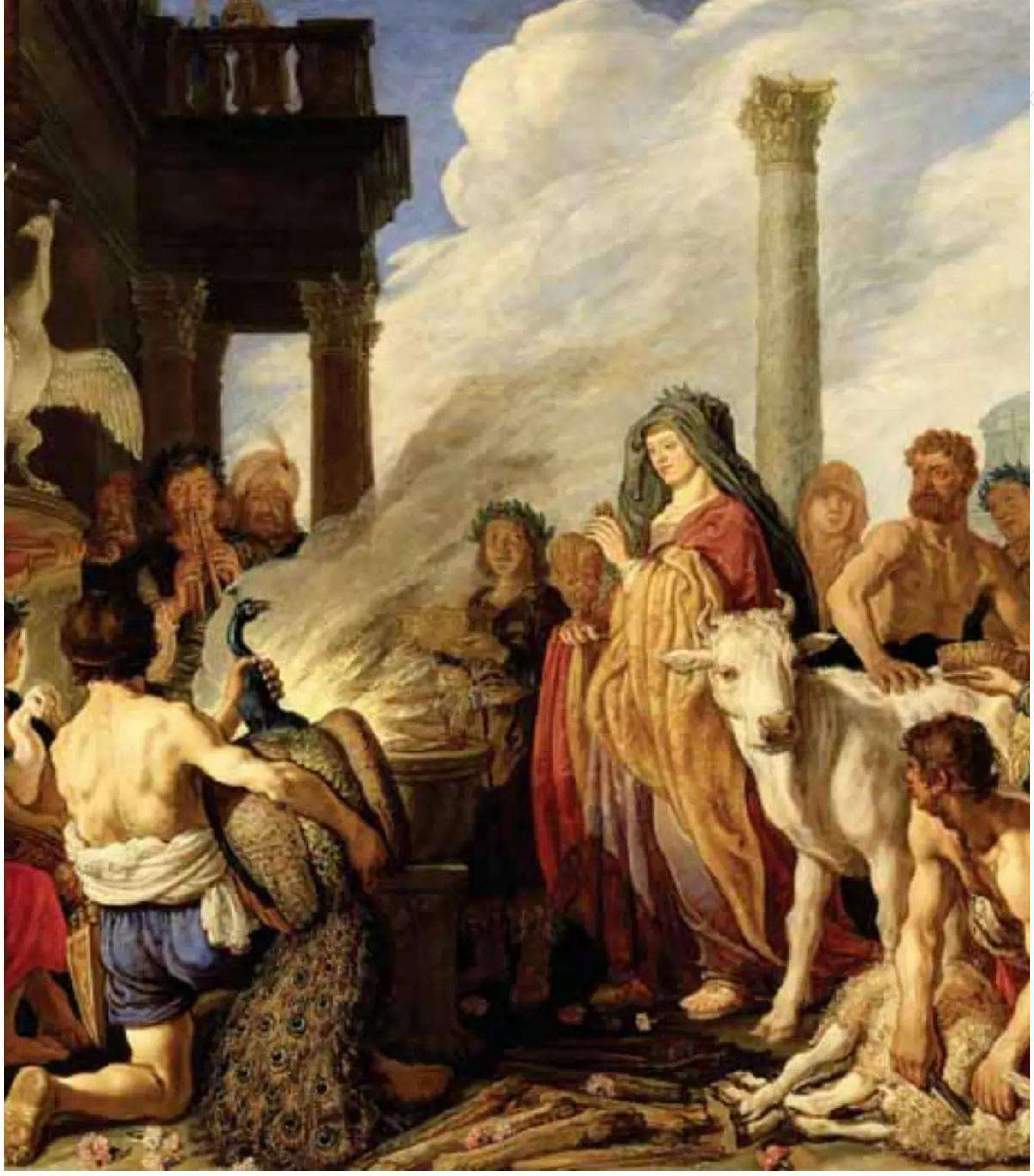


ABOVE The story of Dido is one of loyalty and sacrifice, which has inspired artists, authors, and musicians for centuries

Family feuds

Known to some scholars as Elissa, Dido was the daughter of the Phoenician ruler Mutto, who was the King of Tyre, today part of Lebanon. Dido was a highly intelligent and quick-witted woman whose name has been variously interpreted as meaning "beloved" and "the wanderer". According to the writings, Dido's father declared that she and her younger brother, Pygmalion, should serve as joint rulers of his kingdom in the event of his death. However, when Mutto died, the people chose the young Pygmalion as their sole ruler, against the late king's wishes. With Dido sidelined, second only to Pygmalion in terms of power was his uncle Acerbas, a powerful priest of Heracles. Acerbas was believed to be in possession of an immense fortune, which he had buried to keep it from plunder by his avaricious and duplicitous nephew.

Dido and Acerbas were married and, hungry for the wealth his sister and her husband supposedly possessed, Pygmalion had the priest murdered. Pygmalion intended to force Dido to hand over the treasure, but he had reckoned without the ghost of Acerbas, who appeared to Dido and told her that she must trick Pygmalion into believing she had disposed of the gold, then flee for a new land. Accordingly, Dido asked her attendants to throw a vast number of heavy sacks into the sea. She told them that these contained her husband's wealth and were intended as an offering to his spirit. Little realising that the sacks were actually stuffed with sand, Pygmalion believed that the treasure had been consigned to the depths of the ocean.

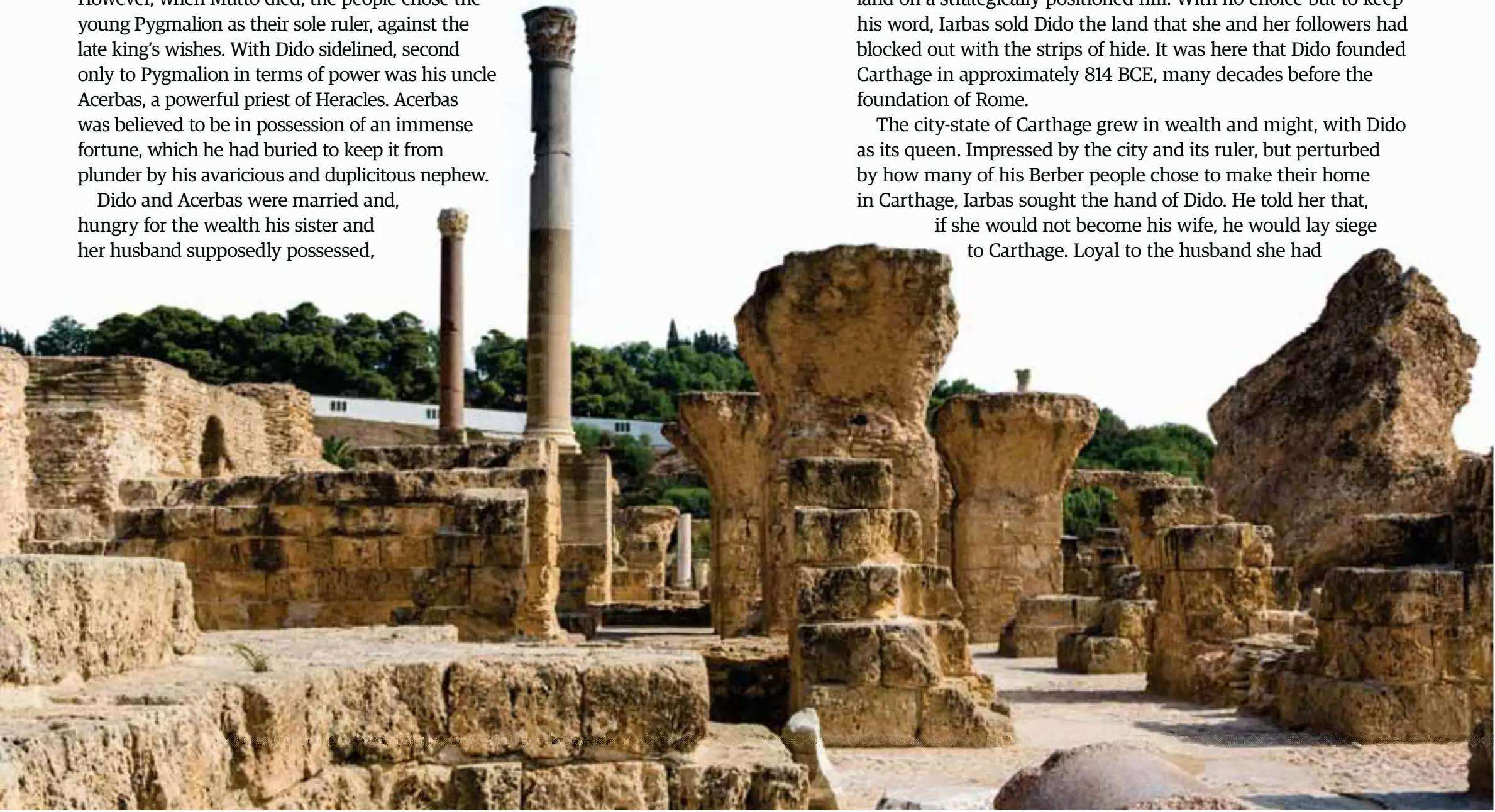
Once the sacks had all been disposed of, Dido warned her attendants that they would face Pygmalion's wrath for their loyalty to her if they remained. They agreed to follow her on a flight to refuge and were joined by a number of influential senators who wished to escape the young, vengeful king. Led by Dido, the party initially travelled to Cyprus, where new followers joined them, then on to Africa and the country that is today known as Tunisia.

> “DIDO'S TALE HAS LONG FASCINATED SCHOLARS, WHO CONTINUE THEIR INVESTIGATIONS INTO WHETHER THIS REMARKABLE WOMAN WAS FLESH AND BLOOD OR MYTH AND LEGEND

Founding Carthage

Upon her arrival in Africa, Dido approached Iarbas, the ruler of the Berbers, and asked if he would trade her some territory on which she could found a settlement. Iarbas agreed, offering to sell Dido only as much land as she could encompass within the hide of a slain ox. However, while Iarbas thought that would be an end to the matter, Dido had her followers cut the ox skin into incredibly thin strips, with which she mapped out a large area of land on a strategically positioned hill. With no choice but to keep his word, Iarbas sold Dido the land that she and her followers had blocked out with the strips of hide. It was here that Dido founded Carthage in approximately 814 BCE, many decades before the foundation of Rome.

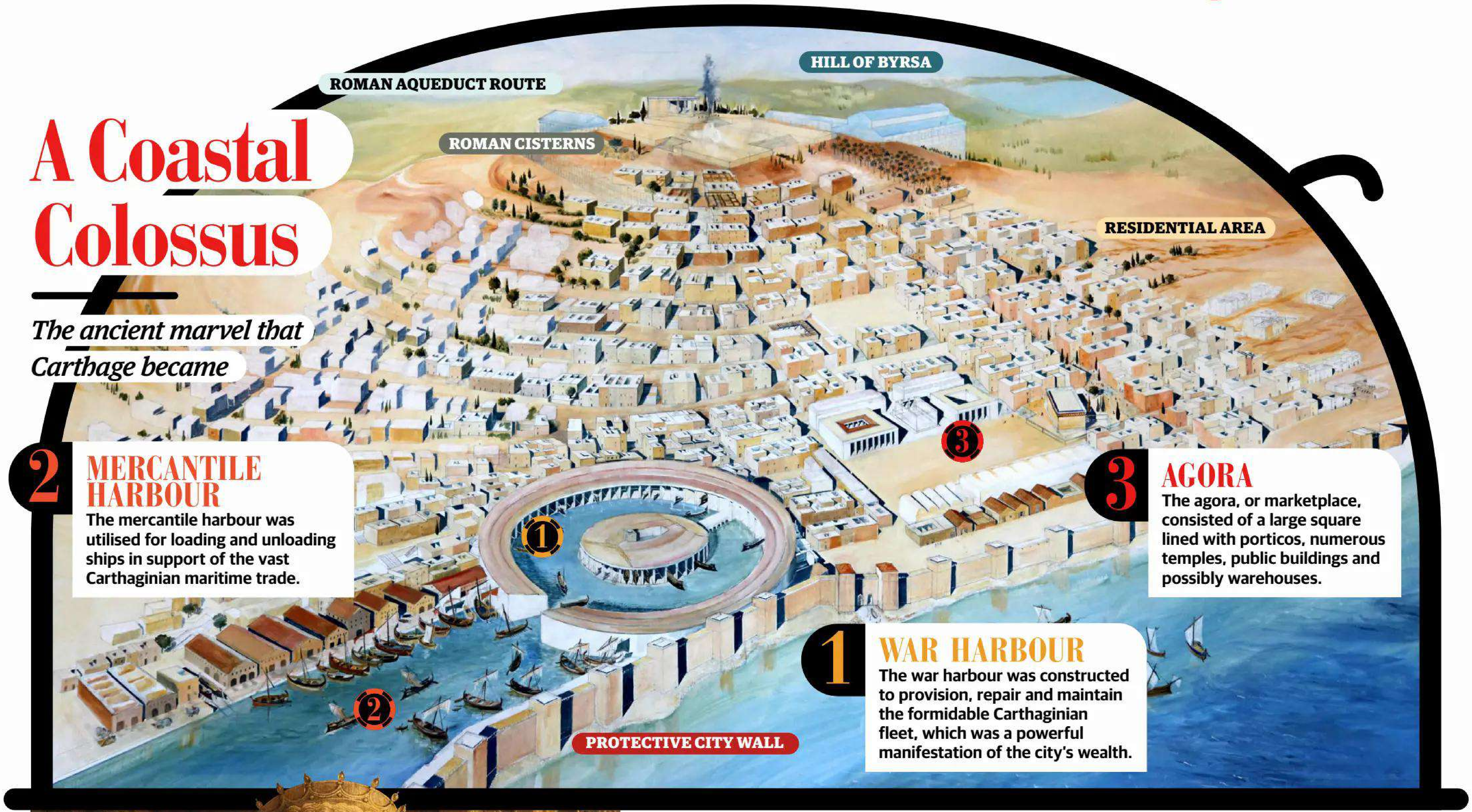
The city-state of Carthage grew in wealth and might, with Dido as its queen. Impressed by the city and its ruler, but perturbed by how many of his Berber people chose to make their home in Carthage, Iarbas sought the hand of Dido. He told her that, if she would not become his wife, he would lay siege to Carthage. Loyal to the husband she had



BELOW Today, Carthage lies in ruins, though it was once a glittering city-state that dominated the area

A Coastal Colossus

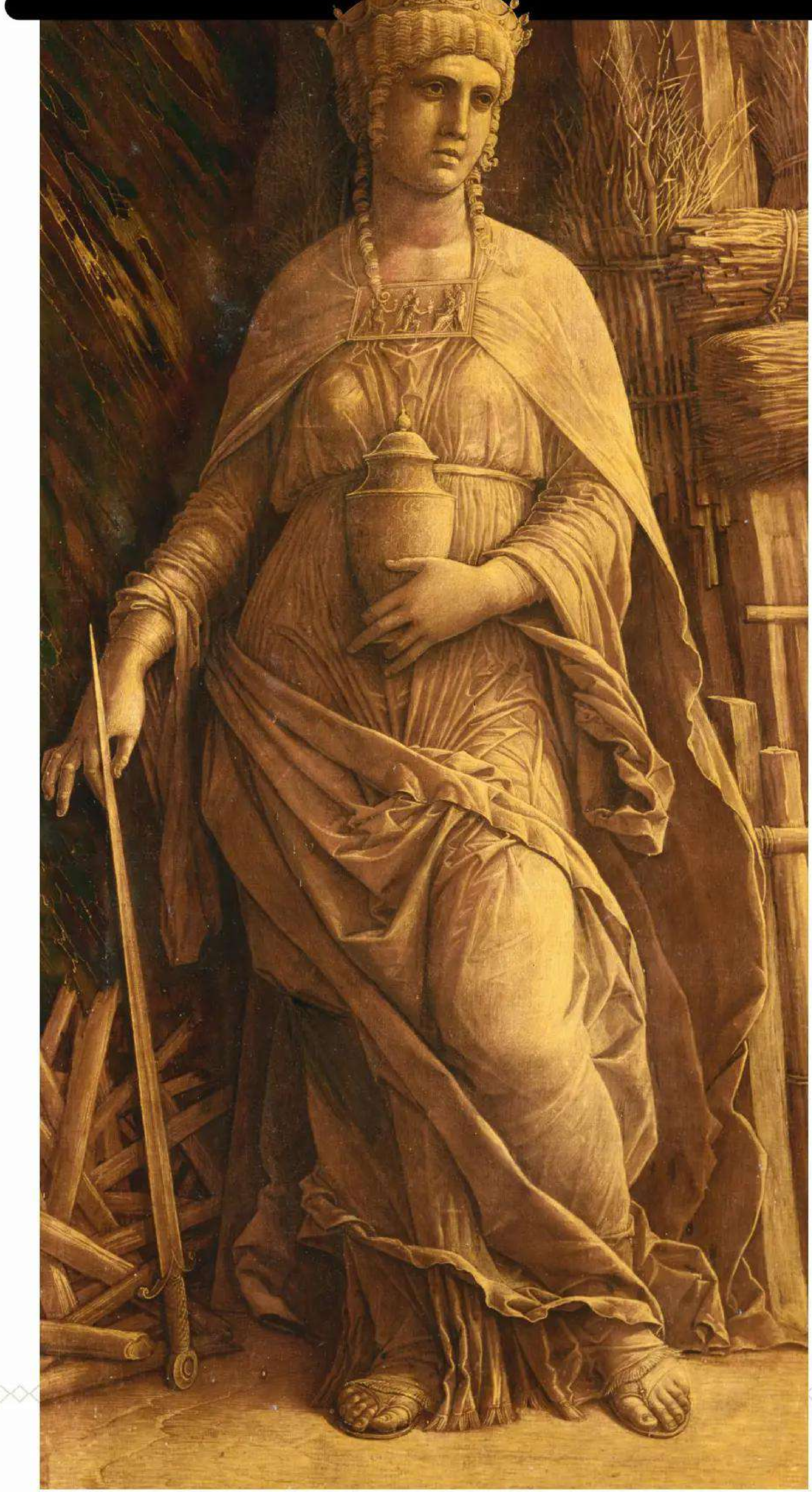
The ancient marvel that Carthage became



2 MERCANTILE HARBOUR
The mercantile harbour was utilised for loading and unloading ships in support of the vast Carthaginian maritime trade.

3 AGORA
The agora, or marketplace, consisted of a large square lined with porticos, numerous temples, public buildings and possibly warehouses.

1 WAR HARBOUR
The war harbour was constructed to provision, repair and maintain the formidable Carthaginian fleet, which was a powerful manifestation of the city's wealth.



LEFT This semi-mythical queen founded the mighty Carthage from nothing, years before the dawn of the Roman Empire

loved but fearing for Carthage, Dido agreed to the marriage. Shortly before the wedding was to occur, Dido built an enormous funeral pyre and began sacrificing many victims in what she said was a final act of honour in memory of Acerbas.

However, rather than submit to the marriage that Iarbas was trying to force on her, at the climax of the ceremony Dido climbed onto the pyre she had built for her husband. Then she drove the blade of a sword through her body, killing herself and escaping her promise to Iarbas. The queen's death elevated her to the status of goddess in the eyes of her people, who worshipped her as a deity afterwards. Carthage, the city Dido had founded, remained a powerful city-state for over half a millennium, until it fell to Rome in 146 BCE.

Fact or fiction?

Dido's story is compelling, but whether it is true has been hotly debated. It has never been verified. Much of the evidence that supports her existence can be extrapolated from ancient histories that mention the reigns of her grandfather and brother. In fact, Josephus, writing in the 1st century CE, specifically refers to Pygmalion's sister by the name Elissa, describing her as having fled her brother's reign during the seventh year to found Carthage. However, while Josephus' writings certainly lend weight to the claim that Dido lived, they were obviously written long after what would have been her lifetime.

There is also circumstantial evidence for Dido's existence if we consider the timelines that classical scholars attached to the founding of Carthage. If we map mentions of Pygmalion and his grandfather in historical writings to the proposed founding dates of Carthage in either 825 BCE or 814 BCE, there is certainly circumstantial evidence that would support Dido's flight in the seventh year of her brother's reign, along with the time she spent wandering, before she settled to found Carthage.

In addition, in 1894 a pendant was found in a 6th-century CE cemetery at Carthage that was inscribed with a verse regarding Pygmalion and the date 814 BCE. This has been taken by some ▶

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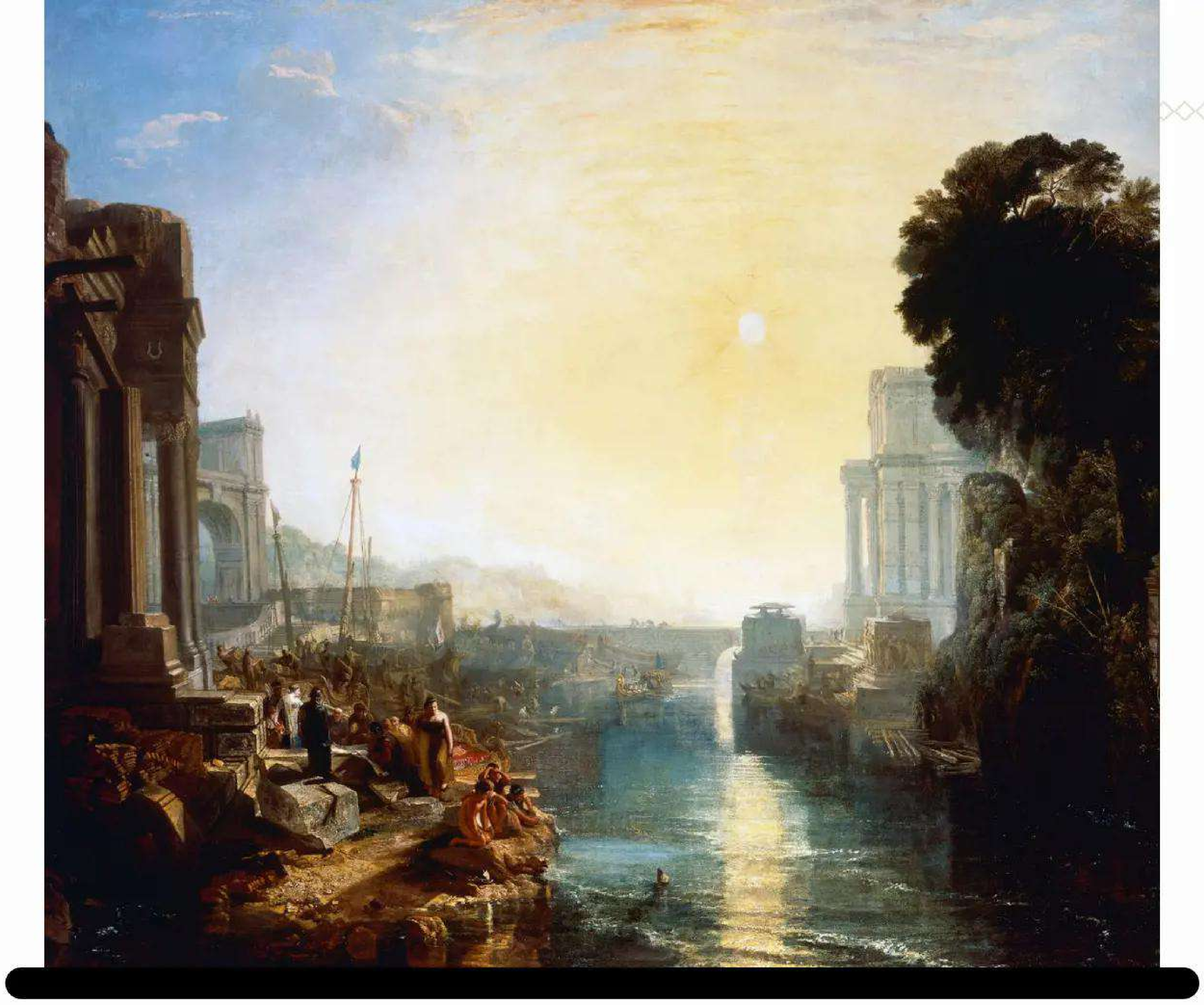


ABOVE Turner's 1815 work, *Dido Building Carthage*, offers an idealised glimpse at the foundation of the city that eventually fell to Rome

BELOW A bronze medal depicting Dido made by Italian artist Alessandro Cesati in the mid-16th century

as evidence of the date of the city's foundation. On a similar note, 4th-century BCE coins found at the site depicting a female figure have likewise been interpreted by some as a representation of Dido.

However, what muddies the waters somewhat is, ironically, the thing that has arguably made Dido most famous to wider readers: her appearance in the *Aeneid*. While Virgil agrees with much of her story as it is usually told, by placing her as a romantic figure who kills herself for Aeneas, the hero of the epic, he has led many to assume that she was entirely fictional. Even if Dido and Aeneas were both real, they could not have shared the story as told in the *Aeneid*: Aeneas would have been an elderly man by the time Dido was queen of Carthage. In the *Aeneid*, as Aeneas sails away from Carthage he sees the funeral pyre which consumes Dido flickering on the horizon; this memorable and tragic death has lingered in the memory of writers and artists. Indeed, since her fictional tangle with the Trojan, Dido's story reached through the ages to inspire Purcell, Turner and Dante among others, sending her further into the realm of myth.

> “IN THIS MYTHICAL TALE OF THE WOMAN WHO BECAME A GODDESS, ALL EMPIRES MUST FALL EXCEPT ROME

Of course, whether Dido existed is one question. Another is whether Dido, if she were real, did actually found and rule Carthage. While the writings tell us that Dido was accompanied by senators when she left Tyre, there is every possibility that myth and fact may have become combined here and that the voyage from Tyre was not a desperate escape, but a deliberate and planned expansion of the Phoenician empire. The pendant found at Carthage contains reference to a soldier sent by Pygmalion in its inscription, which lends additional weight to the idea that Carthage was a Tyrian colony founded by agents sent by the king, rather than his sister. There is no extant evidence to prove that Carthage ever had a monarch in residence at all.

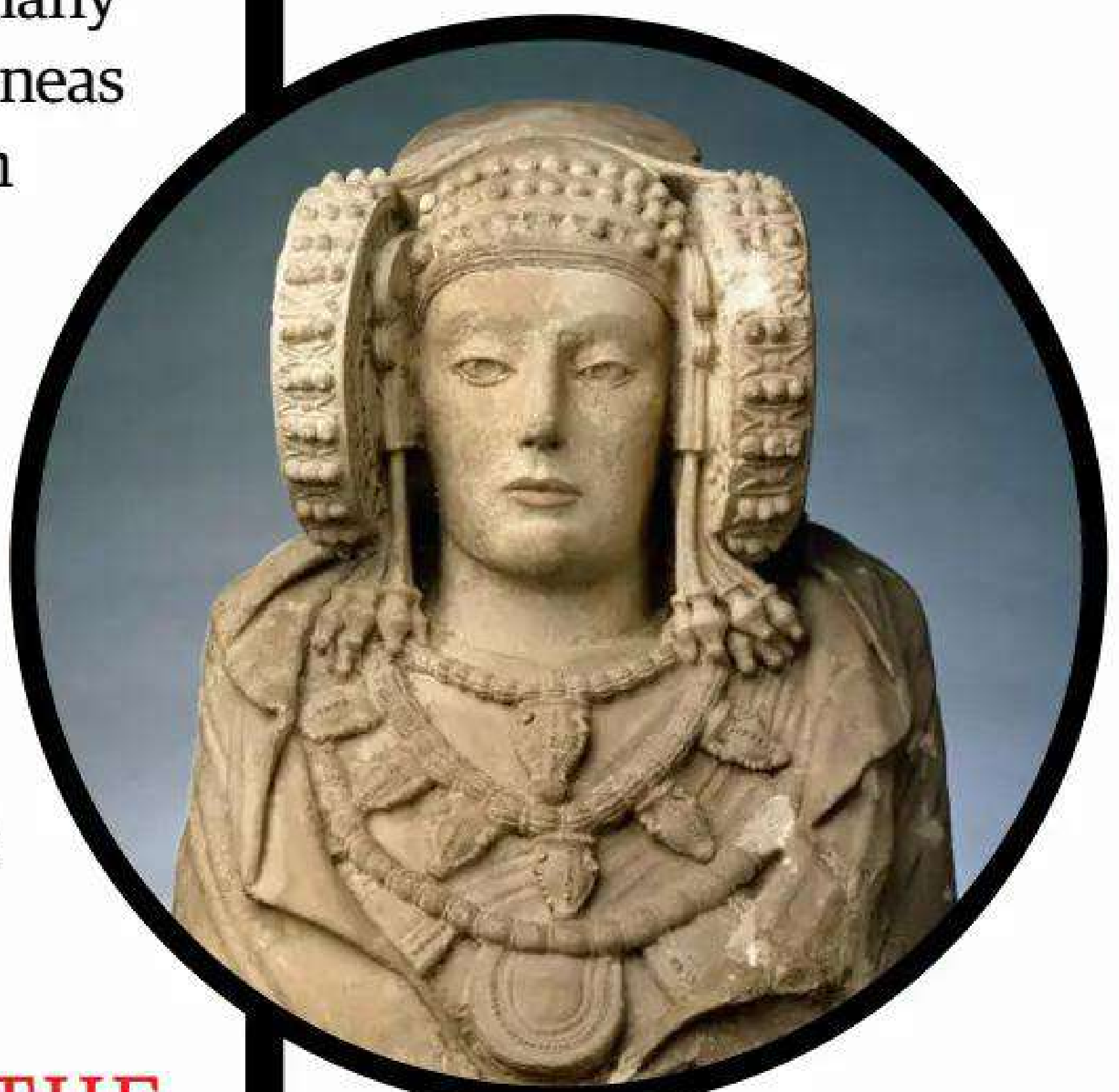
It's generally agreed by historians that Carthage was likely not the first Phoenician settlement in the region and no archaeological

How to Build a Great City

Tips from the ancient world

AUGMENT THE WEALTH OF TYRE

Tyre, the capital of the Phoenician Empire, intended for Carthage to serve as a western Mediterranean port city and outpost for trade and commerce, paying tribute to the capital and generating revenue.

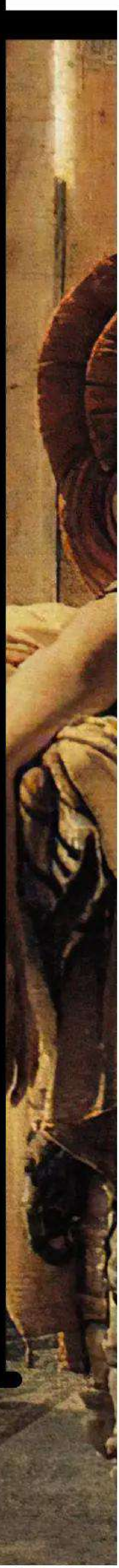


DEVELOP FUTURE TRADE ROUTES

Largely a maritime trading empire, Phoenicia was constantly in search of new trading partners, and expanded its potential for commerce across the Mediterranean. Carthage could open trade with previously unknown lands and peoples in the west.

ESTABLISH A DEFENSIVE PERIMETER

The Carthaginians were a warlike people, both in terms of conquest and defence. Initially, Carthage provided a military buffer for the Phoenicians, and later for the empire in its own right, as it went about exercising expansionist ambitions in the Mediterranean.



evidence has yet been found that definitively supports the recorded founding of Carthage in 814 BCE. Rather, archaeological findings from the site currently suggest that it was founded around a century later than that, placing it squarely outside the lifetime of Dido, both in legend and when measured against the recorded mentions of her brother. This would also put it outside of the reign of Pygmalion, however, to whom reference has been found on jewellery discovered at the site.

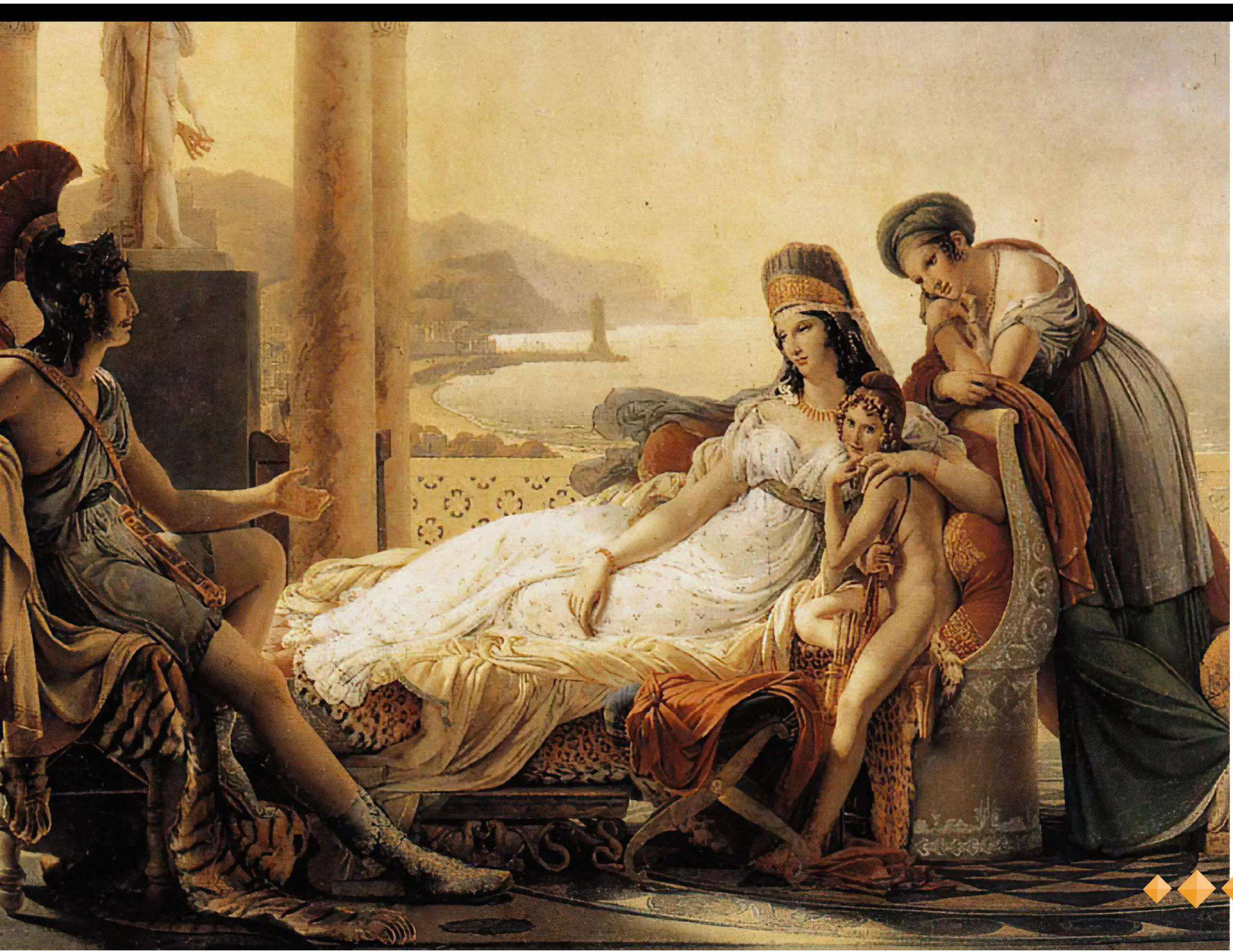
Into legend

Yet, as David Quint notes in *Design and Meaning in the Aeneid*, much of this would have been known to Virgil's readers, who would have certainly been aware that Aeneas and Dido did not feature in one another's story, even if they were both real people. As Quint also points out, the version of the founding of Carthage that has entered myth is a Greco-Roman invention; we don't know what stories Carthaginians themselves told of their city-state's founding, because those stories are lost to us.

What these Greco-Roman versions of events do is serve as a dramatic origin story of sorts; in these legends, Carthage wasn't a colony of an expanding empire that later went on to overwhelm its neighbours, eventually subduing the Berbers who had initially provided the land on which it stood. Instead, it is a mythical tale of the woman who became a goddess, before the powerful city-state she founded eventually fell to the conquering might of Rome. As written by the Romans, the lesson was simple: all empires must fall except Rome.

Virgil's fictionalised account rewrites Dido's sacrifice too. In this version, she doesn't kill herself out of love for her murdered husband, but because she has betrayed his memory with Aeneas, admittedly under the influence of Cupid. In this reading, Carthage was not a city founded by a woman who would give her life rather than submit to male domination, but a woman whose uncontrolled passions drive her to an act of self-destruction that ultimately brings down the city she founded. It is precisely this act that condemns her to Hell in Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It is a very different note on which to end her story versus the deification common to the oldest versions of the myth. In these, Dido's sacrifice proves to be the thing that inspires the Carthaginians to achieve greatness, not the touchpaper that eventually brings down the city.

Given her appearance in ancient writings and the references to a sister of Pygmalion, it is likely that Dido did indeed exist, most likely as the woman referred to as Elissa. Whether Elissa was indeed the founder of the powerful city-state of Carthage is currently unproven. Under her new name, which means "wanderer", however, Queen Dido entered myth and became a legendary figure.



BELOW Today, Dido is better known as the doomed lover of Aeneas, the Trojan hero of Virgil's writings

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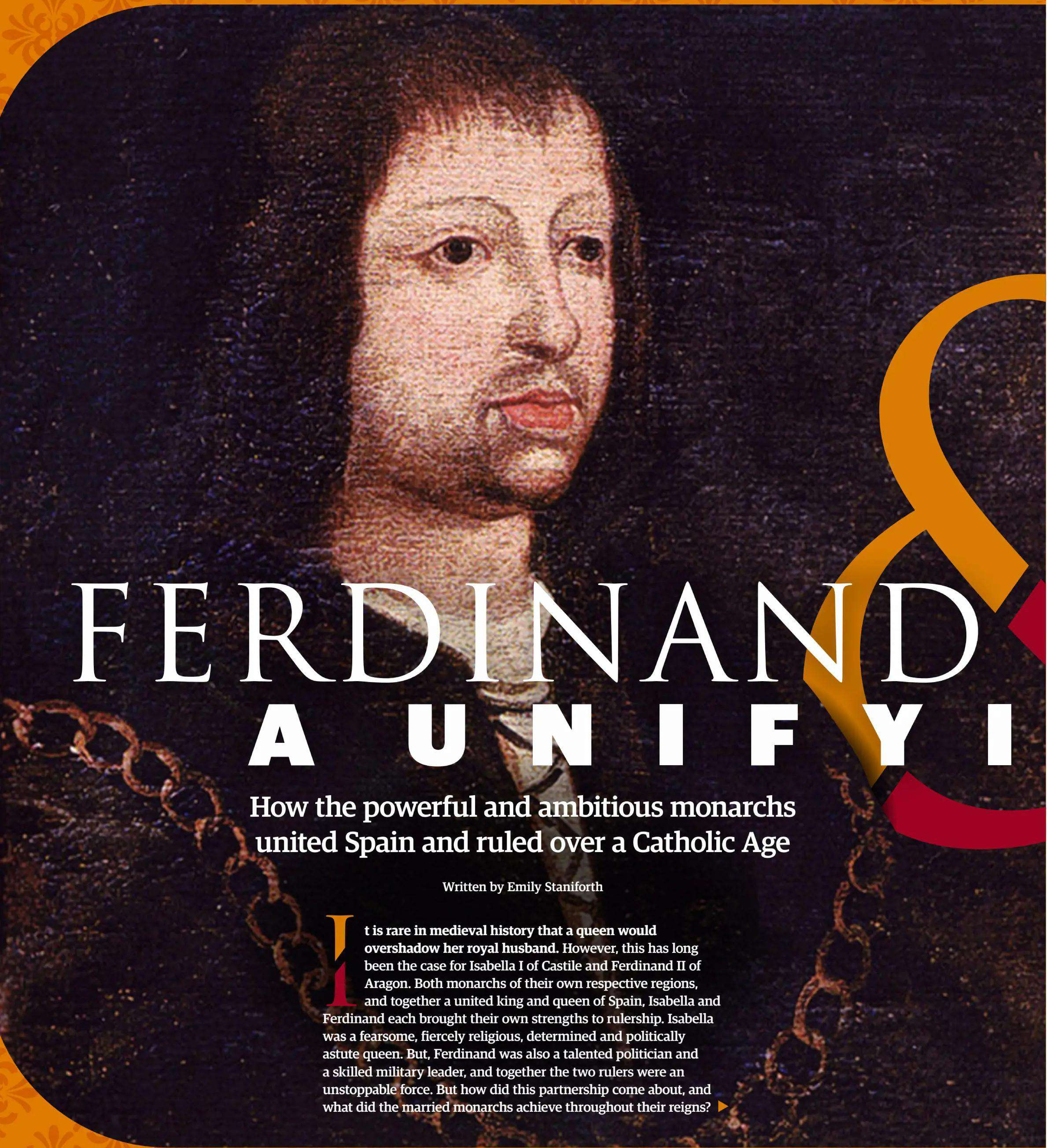
HISTORY OF ROYALS



FERDINAND &

A UNIFYI

How the powerful and ambitious monarchs united Spain and ruled over a Catholic Age

Written by Emily Staniforth

It is rare in medieval history that a queen would overshadow her royal husband. However, this has long been the case for Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon. Both monarchs of their own respective regions, and together a united king and queen of Spain, Isabella and Ferdinand each brought their own strengths to rulership. Isabella was a fearsome, fiercely religious, determined and politically astute queen. But, Ferdinand was also a talented politician and a skilled military leader, and together the two rulers were an unstoppable force. But how did this partnership come about, and what did the married monarchs achieve throughout their reigns? ▶

&ISABELLA
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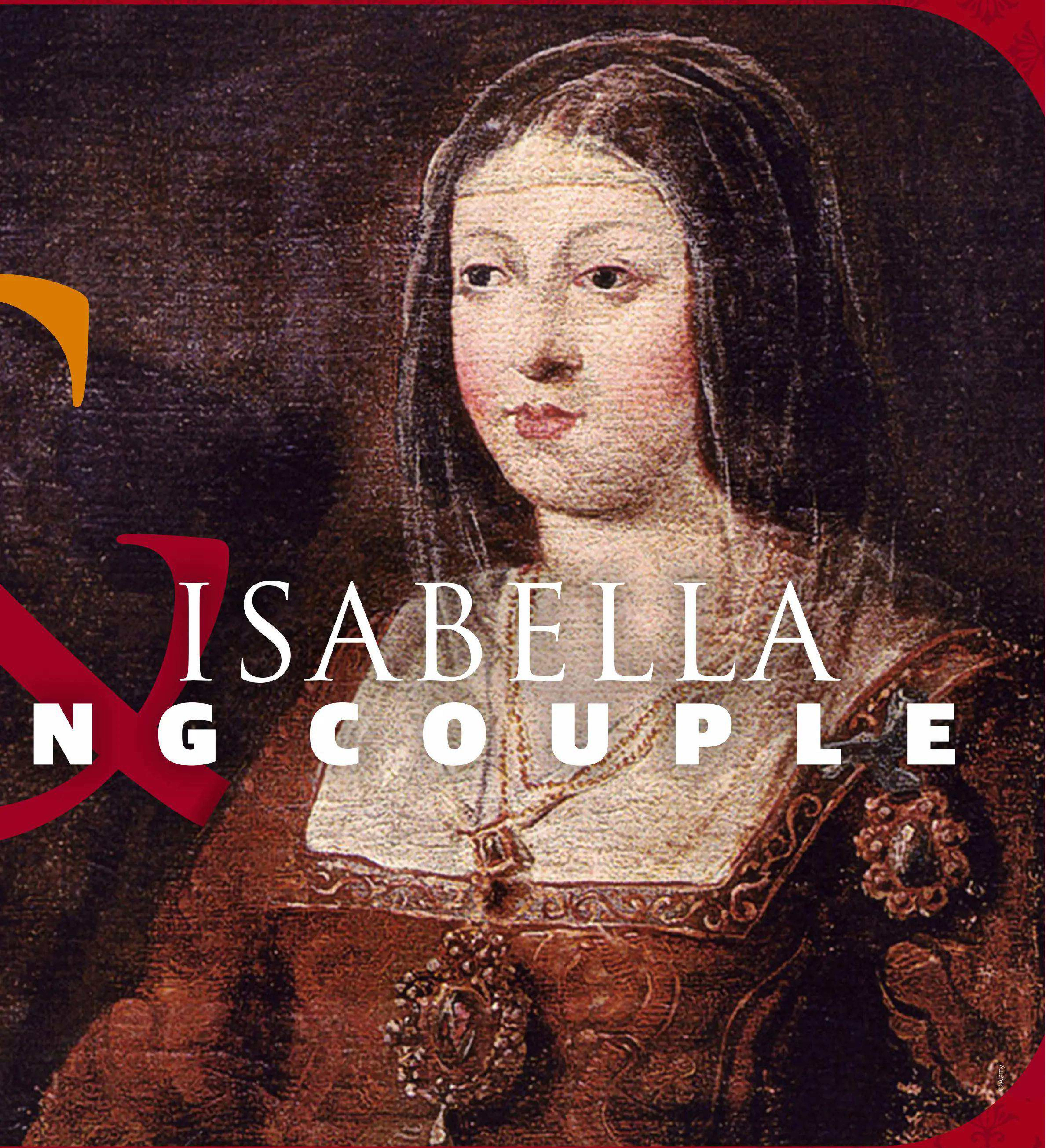

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A ROCKY START

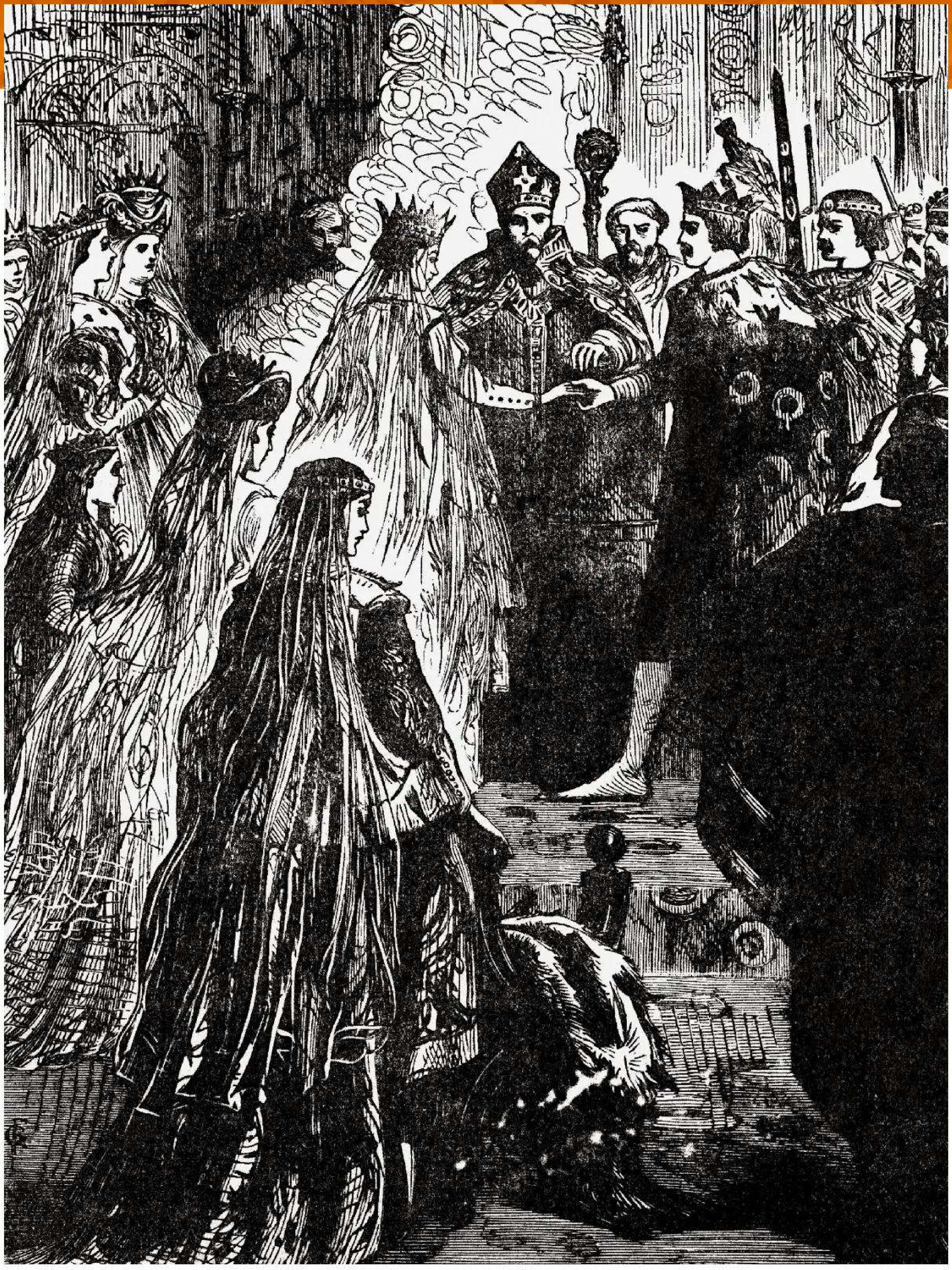
Before the marriage of Isabella and Ferdinand in 1469, the land we now recognise as Spain was made up of a number of smaller kingdoms, each ruled by their own authority. The kingdom of Castile was by far the largest of these constituent kingdoms, with the Castilian monarchs being powerful figures in the Iberian Peninsula. Prior to the accession of Isabella I to the throne, Castile was ruled by her older half-brother Henry IV, with whom she shared a father. Henry's reign was a turbulent time for Castile, with Henry not being the most capable monarch the kingdom had seen. During his reign, the power of the crown and the unity of Castile deteriorated, while the power of the nobility rose.

The matter of the Castilian succession was also a troublesome issue, with the legitimacy of Henry's only child being called into question. Having had no children with his first wife of 13 years, and the marriage finally being annulled due to the fact that it was never consummated, Henry's second marriage to the Portuguese princess Joan resulted in the birth of a daughter, Joanna. The nickname given to the young princess and heir presumptive of the Castilian throne was "La Beltraneja", as many Castilians presumed she was actually the daughter of the nobleman Beltrán de La Cueva. The circumstances surrounding the annulment of Henry's first marriage had led to the king earning the nickname "the Impotent", and it was thus assumed that he could not be the father of Joanna. Facing opposition from the Castilian nobility, Henry decided to appoint his half-sister Isabella as the next in line to the throne over La Beltraneja. This decision was made upon the condition that Henry would choose a husband for Isabella, and at the time she accepted those terms.

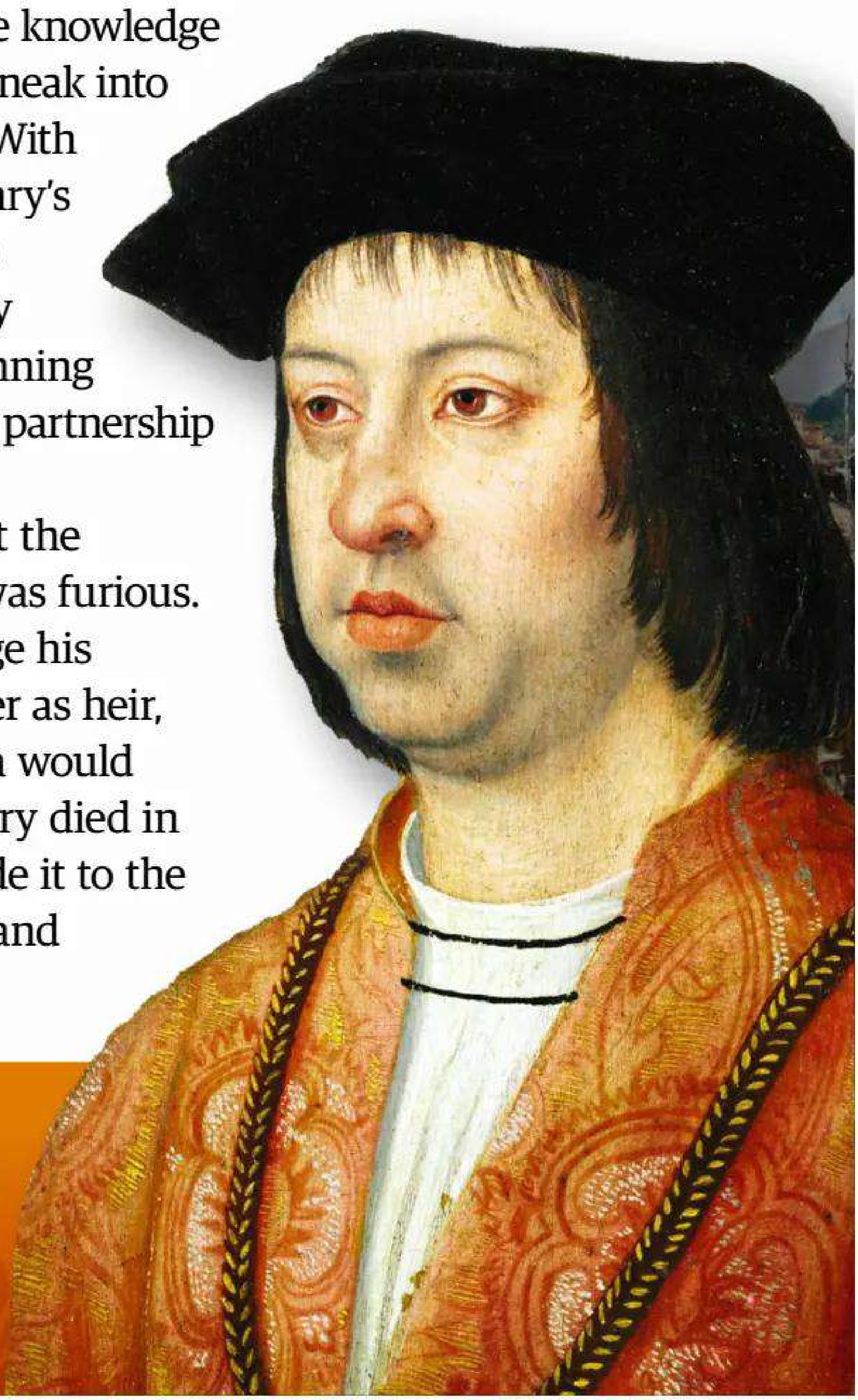
Unfortunately for Henry, Isabella was a headstrong young woman who knew her own mind. At around the age of six, she had been betrothed to a boy called Ferdinand who was the son of the King of Aragon, a neighbouring kingdom. Though this engagement had been broken off, the connection between the pair endured despite them never having met one another. While Henry and his advisors were busy choosing a potential husband for the next monarch of Castile, Isabella had other ideas. In the years since the engagement had been dissolved, Ferdinand had become heir to the Aragonese throne after the suspicious death of his rebellious older brother, and having fought alongside his father and against his brother in a civil war, Ferdinand had gained impressive military experience. Isabella, at only 18 years old, could see the political potential in a union with 17-year-old Ferdinand, and the advantages that joining their two kingdoms together would have become too much to ignore. In 1469, the pair decided to take control of their own destinies and, without seeking Isabella's brother's permission, agreed to marry in order to create a new future for themselves and their respective principalities. But there was one problem with their plan – Isabella and Ferdinand were second cousins and needed a special dispensation from the Pope in order to wed. It would have been a difficult process to petition for a papal dispensation, but a document signed by Pope Pius II was obtained. Though this document allowed the wedding to go ahead, there remain doubts over its validity, as Pius II actually died five years before he supposedly signed it. It seems likely that Ferdinand's father, John II of Aragon, had some hand in forging the document, as he was all too aware of the significance and power that his son's marriage to Isabella would hold.

In order to marry without the knowledge of Henry IV, Ferdinand had to sneak into Castile, disguised as a servant. With Isabella stealing away from Henry's court, the young couple met up and married in secret in the city of Valladolid, marking the beginning of, arguably, the most powerful partnership in early modern Europe.

When Henry discovered that the marriage had taken place, he was furious. He made the decision to change his will and appointed his daughter as heir, displacing Isabella. But Isabella would not back down, and when Henry died in 1474, she ensured that she made it to the city of Segovia before Joanna, and



LEFT The marriage of Isabella and Ferdinand created the first version of a unified Spain



BELOW Ferdinand inherited the throne of Aragon in 1479

BELOW RIGHT The surrender of Sultan Boabdil of Granada to Isabella and Ferdinand

> "ISABELLA WAS A HEADSTRONG YOUNG WOMAN WHO KNEW HER OWN MIND"

had herself declared as Queen of Castile. Although this act was largely symbolic, and of course Joanna and her supporters were not going to take the move lying down, it signalled the start of a decisive reign for Isabella in which she would make a number of bold political statements and strive to achieve what she wanted. From 1475 to 1479, the War of the Castilian Succession raged as Joanna's forces fought those of Isabella and Ferdinand for the crown. Joanna married her uncle, King Afonso V of Portugal, who aided her struggle by supplying Portuguese troops. Successful political and military strategies were employed by Isabella and Ferdinand on land, but they experienced defeat by the Portuguese in naval warfare, and eventually the Treaty of Alcáçovas was signed. The outcome agreed that Isabella would keep the Castilian crown. In the meantime, Ferdinand's father had died and he had inherited the kingship of Aragon.

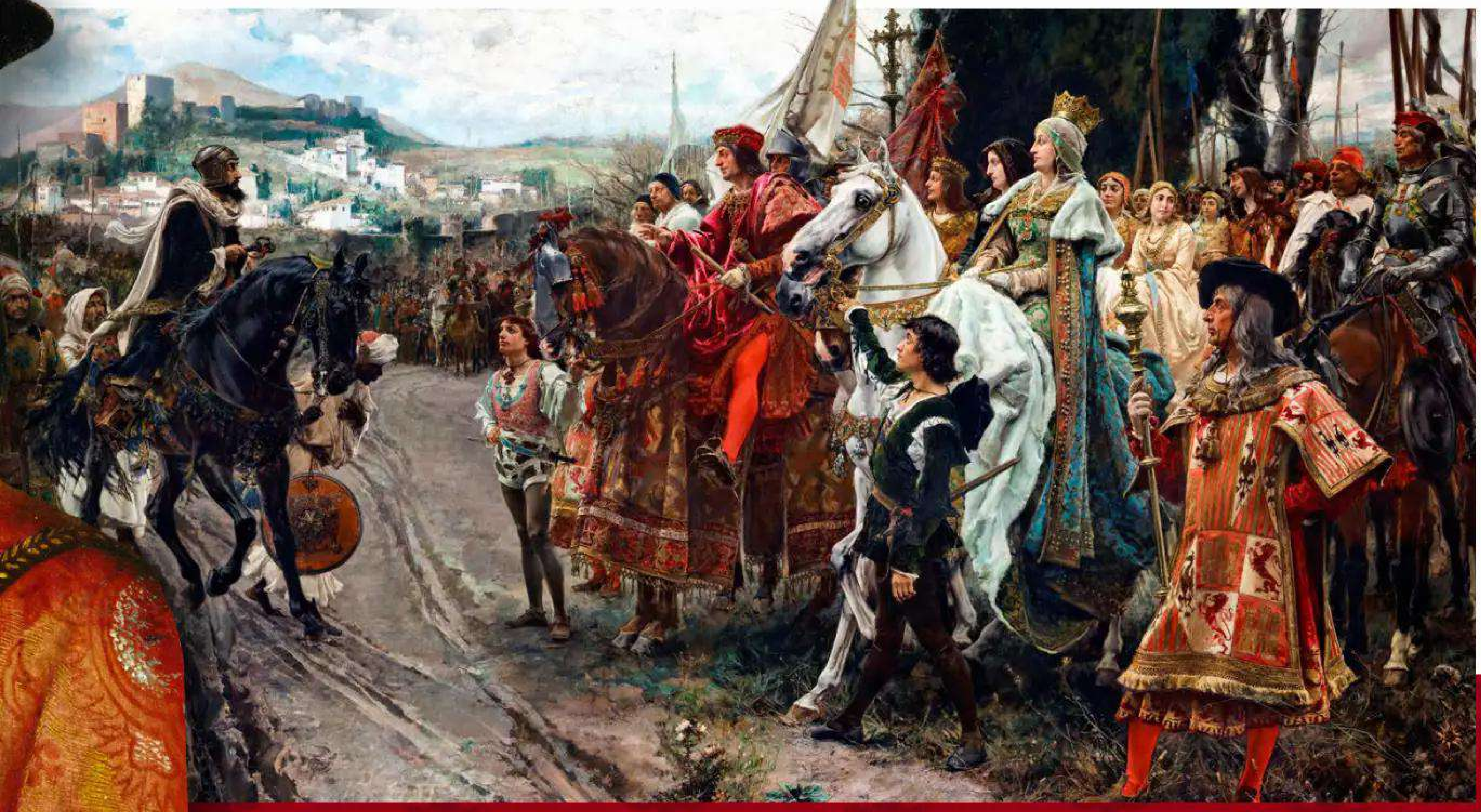
AS MONARCHS

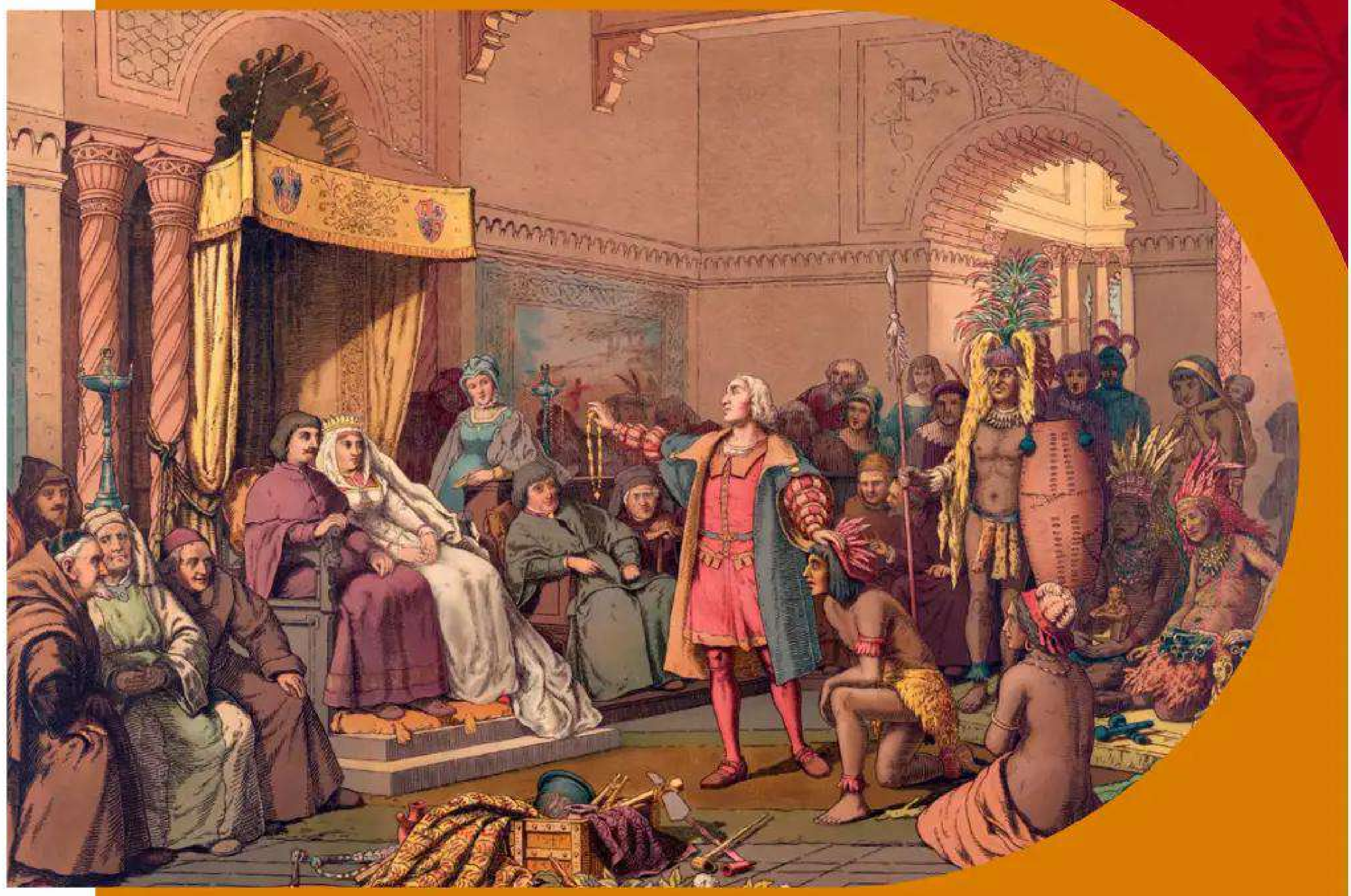
Despite their turbulent beginnings as monarchs, the de facto unification of Spain that occurred due to the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella marked the start of a new era in the region. Both monarchs set about re-establishing royal authority in Castile and Aragon after years of the decentralisation of power. Isabella took the reins in handling domestic affairs for their joint kingdoms, while Ferdinand looked outwards, focusing on issues of foreign diplomacy. The way in which Isabella governed, however, established her image as an independent ruler, and it quickly became clear that in terms of ruling Castile, Ferdinand held a position as his wife's consort. Though they were a partnership in their marriage and in wider rulership, it was Isabella who called the shots in Castile. When they had married in 1469, Isabella had ensured that her new husband had signed a Marriage Concession in which he acknowledged that Castile was his wife's domain and not his. He had also agreed that the Spanish monarchy would rule from Castile, not Aragon. And while it is certainly true that Isabella appeared to be the most dominant of the two, Ferdinand was also an impressive king in many respects. He presided over Aragon, keeping his rule largely separate from his wife's in Castile despite the unification of the two realms.

His political capabilities were admired across Europe, with Machiavelli even mentioning Ferdinand in his notorious work *The Prince* as an example of an extraordinary ruler of the time. Having secured victory over Portugal in order to consolidate Isabella's position as Queen of Castile, Ferdinand also led armies in other important military engagements to great success, most notably in the war to claim Granada from the Moors.

THE RECONQUISTA

Arguably the most important development that happened during the reign of Isabella and Ferdinand was the Reconquista – the "reconquest" of Spain that reclaimed land from non-Christians. From the outset, Isabella and Ferdinand prioritised their own personal Catholic faith and wanted their kingdoms to reflect their religious beliefs. They wished to rule over a Christian kingdom, but ▶





DISCOVERING THE NEW WORLD

How Isabella and Ferdinand funded Columbus' journey to the Americas

It wasn't only marriage contracts that helped to expand Ferdinand and Isabella's influence across the world. The year 1492 yet again marked an important milestone in their reign, and in the history of Spain and the wider world. Christopher Columbus, a Genoese explorer, had been attempting to secure a patron to finance a voyage. He wanted to prove that he could reach Asia by heading west from Europe, a route he believed may be possible rather than sailing around the African continent. Columbus struggled to secure backing from the Portuguese and the English, but when he turned to Isabella and Ferdinand, he found eager supporters. The Catholic monarchs wanted to ensure that Spain participated in the Age of Discovery that had begun with Portuguese expeditions, and to potentially spread their Christian influence outside of their own domain.

Setting out in 1492 to make his journey, Columbus and his crew were financed by Castilian money. Though he never made it to Asia, Columbus unexpectedly stumbled upon the Americas, landing in the Caribbean in October 1492. Columbus' journey to America paved the way for wider European exploration of the continent, and ultimately the colonisation of its land and people. After his second visit to the Caribbean, Columbus reportedly enslaved around 500 indigenous people and sent them to Spain as a gift for Queen Isabella. However, the reception of this gift could not have been what Columbus hoped for, as Isabella sent them back to their home. She was outraged that Columbus had enslaved them, as she viewed them as her own subjects given that Columbus had 'discovered' their land in the name of Spain. While on her deathbed, Isabella even edited her will to state that the people of the New World should be treated kindly.

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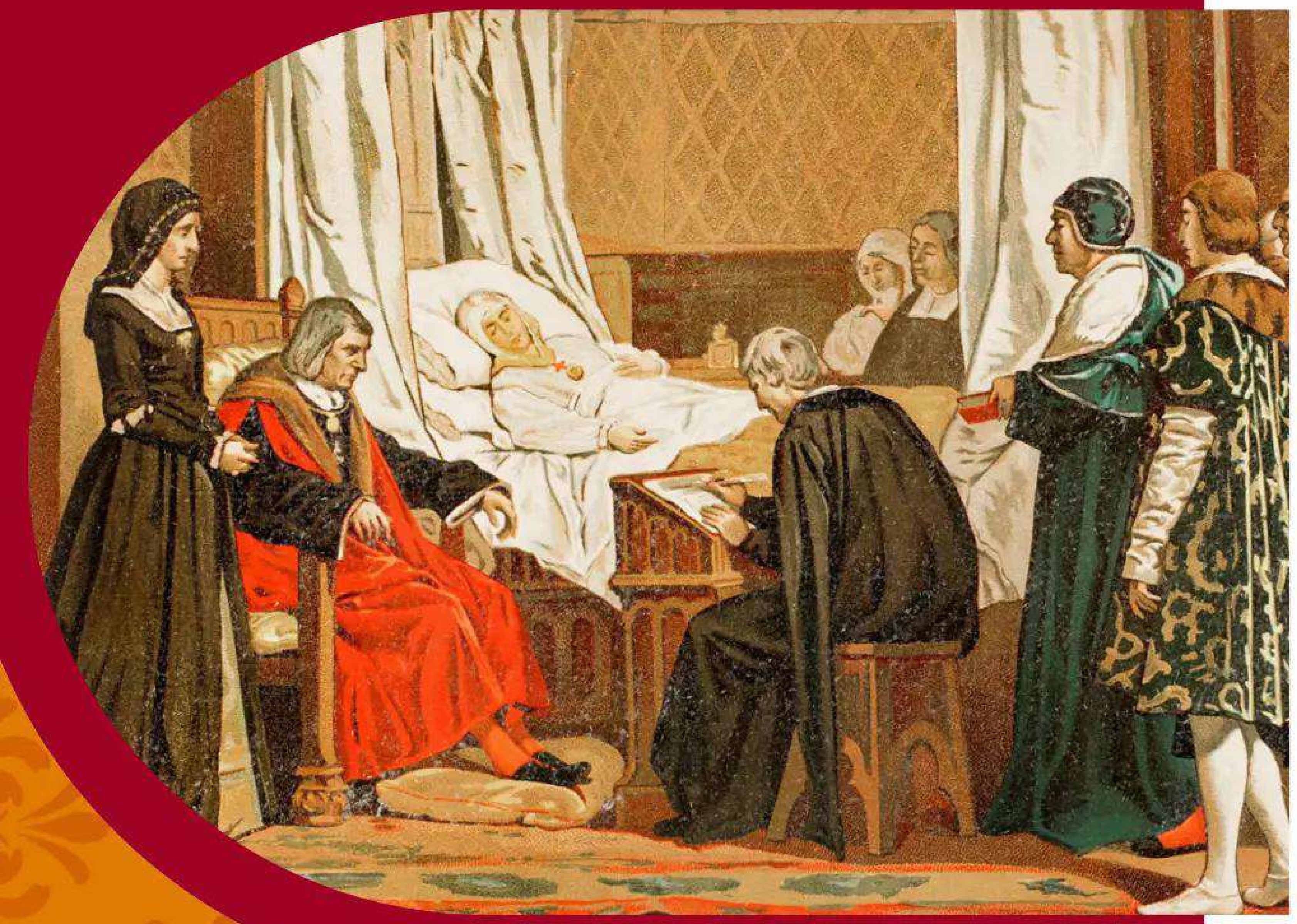
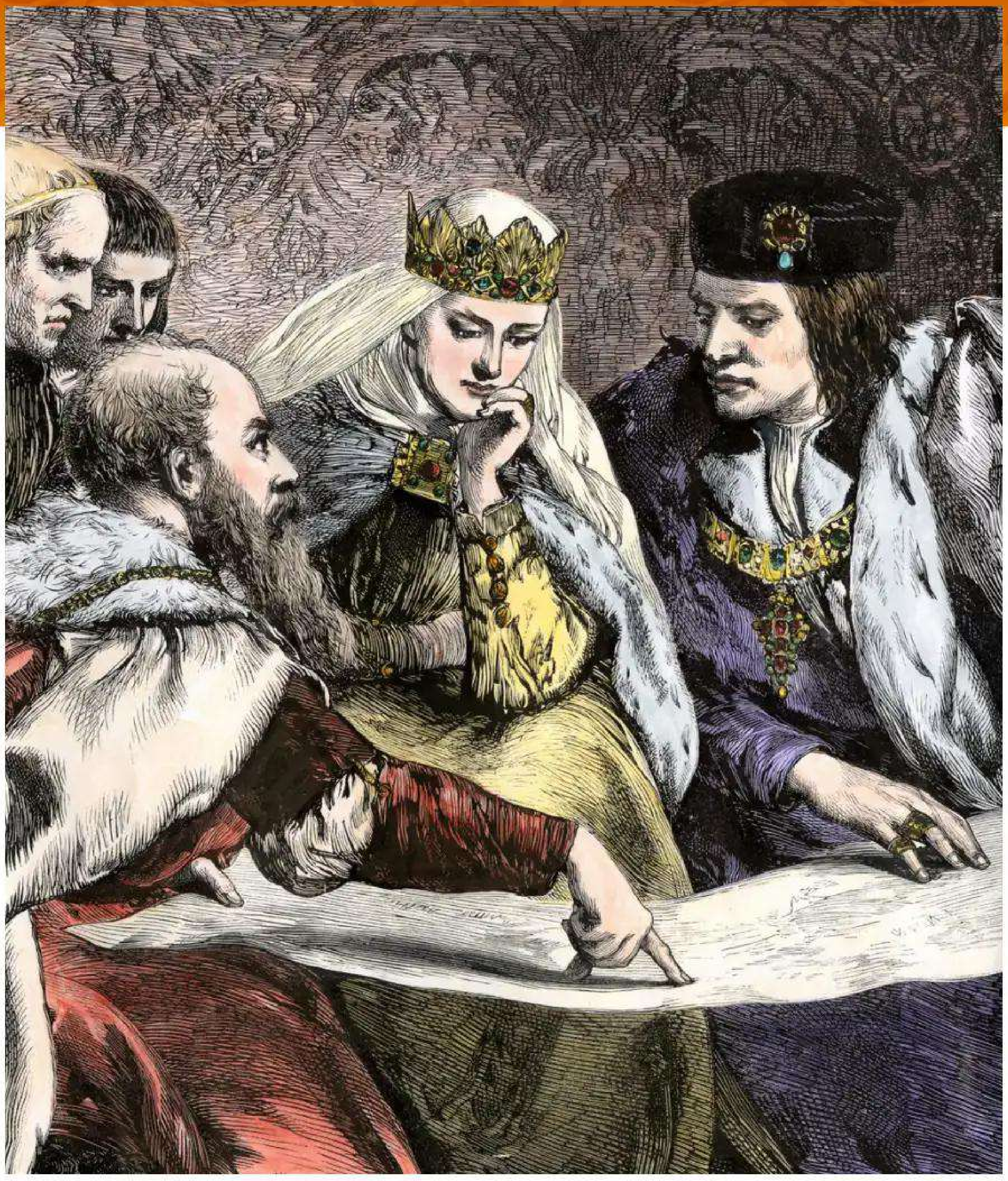
FERDINAND AFTER ISABELLA

What did Ferdinand's life look like after the death of his wife?

In 1504, the mighty Queen Isabella died, leaving Ferdinand without his partner for the first time since he was a teenager. With a number of his children having died before his wife, Ferdinand's daughter Juana was set to inherit the Castilian crown upon her mother's death. However, it is believed that Juana suffered from some form of mental illness. Some historians have suggested she struggled with depression, while others have posited that she may have had a condition such as schizophrenia or bipolar. As a result of her mental health, she became known as Juana the Mad, and Isabella had foreseen that she may have faced difficulties if she inherited the crown. Juana's mother had stated in her will that if Juana was unable to rule, Ferdinand would rule as her regent. Whether or not Juana would have been fit to rule is an unanswerable question, but we do know that Ferdinand took on the regency of Castile.

In 1505, Ferdinand married the young Germaine de Foix, the niece of the King of France. This move allied him to the French, and gave him a son. Since his son with Isabella had died, Ferdinand likely hoped that this son could inherit the Spanish crown after his death. But, the young boy died only hours after he was born. When Ferdinand died in 1516, the Crown of Aragon passed to Juana, and she became Queen of both Castile and Aragon. Her husband, Philip, had died in 1506, and so Juana's son Charles reigned beside her as her co-ruler until her death. Charles, the grandson of Isabella and Ferdinand, became one of the most powerful figures in early modern Europe, with his titles including King of Spain, Holy Roman Emperor and Lord of the Netherlands.



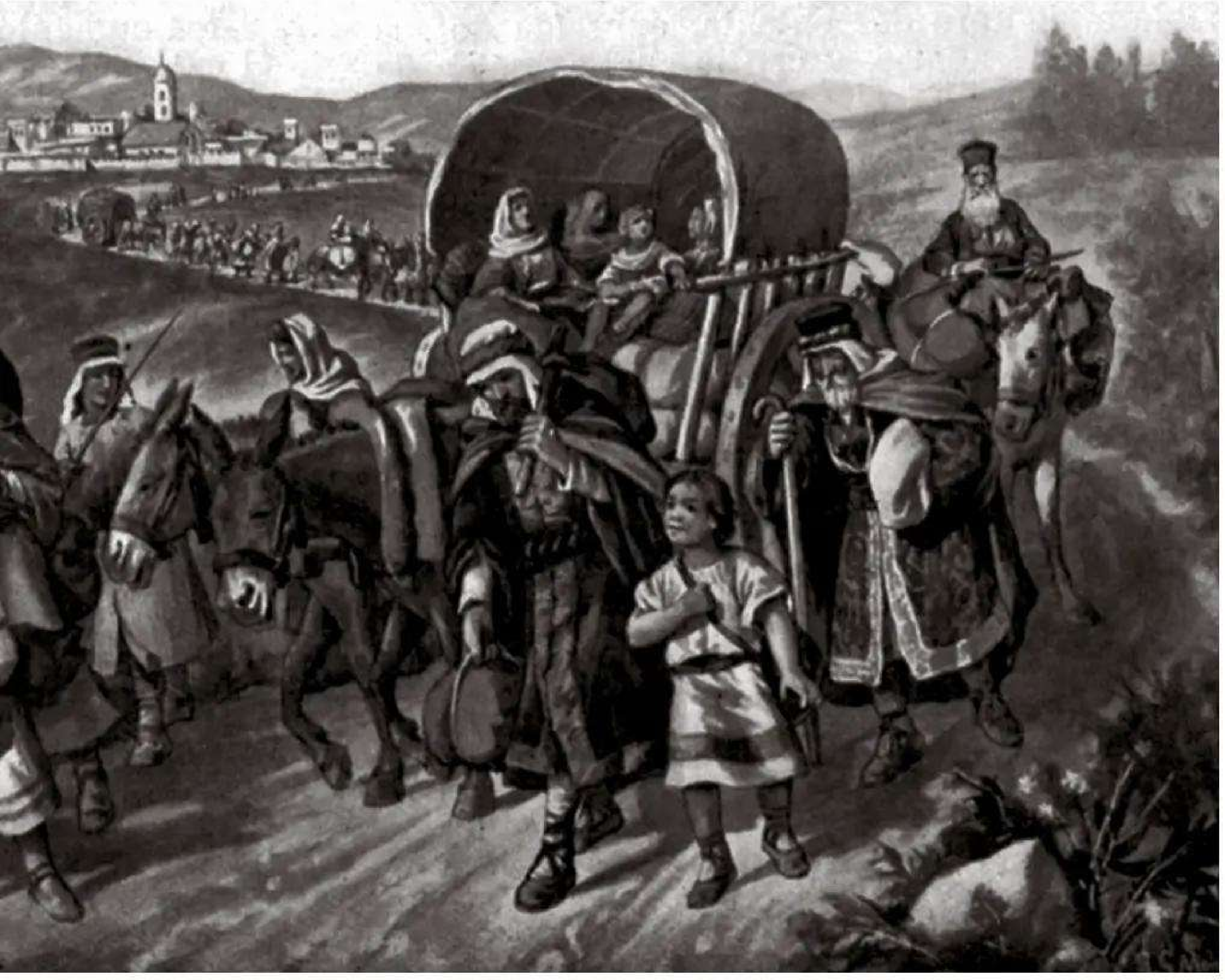


they faced a problem in that the Iberian Peninsula was populated by a significant number of Jewish citizens, as well as being home to Moorish strongholds. Ferdinand and Isabella blamed corruption in the Catholic Church on Conversos (Jews who had converted to Catholicism to evade the persecution that had faced the Jewish population for centuries) and hatred towards the Conversos was rife, as it was a common belief that they were not true Christians and secretly continued to practise their Jewish faith. Partly as a result of this attitude towards Conversos, and in order to ensure that Castile embodied the united Christian kingdom they were striving for, Isabella and Ferdinand made the decision to establish the Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in 1478. The Inquisition, notorious for its brutal techniques, was tasked with seeking out so-called heretics across Ferdinand and Isabella's territories. Appointing an Inquisitor General to oversee the torture and executions of thousands of perceived heretics, Isabella and Ferdinand presided over a reign of terror in which people lived in fear of being questioned, found out and killed. Conversos began to leave Spain en masse, hoping to find a safer life elsewhere.

In terms of Ferdinand and Isabella's religious mission, 1492 was the most important and significant year of their reigns. During their rule, the Moors that had long inhabited the Iberian Peninsula had become centred in Granada at the southern end of Spain, as the forces of the Reconquista pushed Muslims further and further south. In Granada, Muslim life, art and culture flourished under the rule of the Sultans at the Alhambra Palace, posing a threat to the vision of Isabella and Ferdinand's Christian kingdom. From the 1480s, the pair made a decisive effort to claim the remaining lands held by Muslims, and with their sights set on Granada a war began. Isabella and Ferdinand's Christian armies faced the Muslim forces of Sultan Boabdil in a long and costly campaign until on 2 January 1492, Boabdil capitulated to the Catholic monarchs and Granada, the last Muslim stronghold in Spain, fell. The impact of this victory for Isabella and Ferdinand was devastating for the Moors in Spain, as many were forced to convert. The Moriscos (Muslims who had converted to Christianity) were never truly accepted into Christian Spain, and were eventually expelled from the country during the reign of Philip III in 1609.

Following the conquest of Granada, and having taken the advice of Inquisitor General Torquemada, Isabella and Ferdinand issued the Alhambra Decree on 31 March 1492, which gave the Jewish population of their kingdoms a choice.

> "THE SPANISH MONARCHS VIEWED THEIR CHILDREN'S MARRIAGES AS STRATEGIC"



TOP LEFT Isabella and Ferdinand met with Christopher Columbus to discuss his journey to the Indies

ABOVE A depiction of Jewish families fleeing Castile in 1492

BELOW Isabella had herself proclaimed Queen of Castile after the death of her half-brother

BELOW RIGHT Isabella and Ferdinand are buried together in the cathedral at Granada

Either they could convert to Catholicism, or they would be expelled from the region. The edict specified that Spanish Jews would have a few months to make their decision, and while many converted in order to remain in Spain, many others decided to hurriedly leave and emigrate. It is believed that around 40,000 Jews attempted to escape from Spain, with the Ottoman Empire a popular destination for those seeking refuge. However, even if they made it out of Spain, the reception awaiting the expelled Jews elsewhere was not always a welcome one. Though with the expulsion of the Jews the Catholic monarchs had, in principle, achieved the Reconquista, they still faced many religious challenges after 1492 dealing with the converted Jews and Muslims who remained in Spain. But, their bloody campaign had achieved its aims.

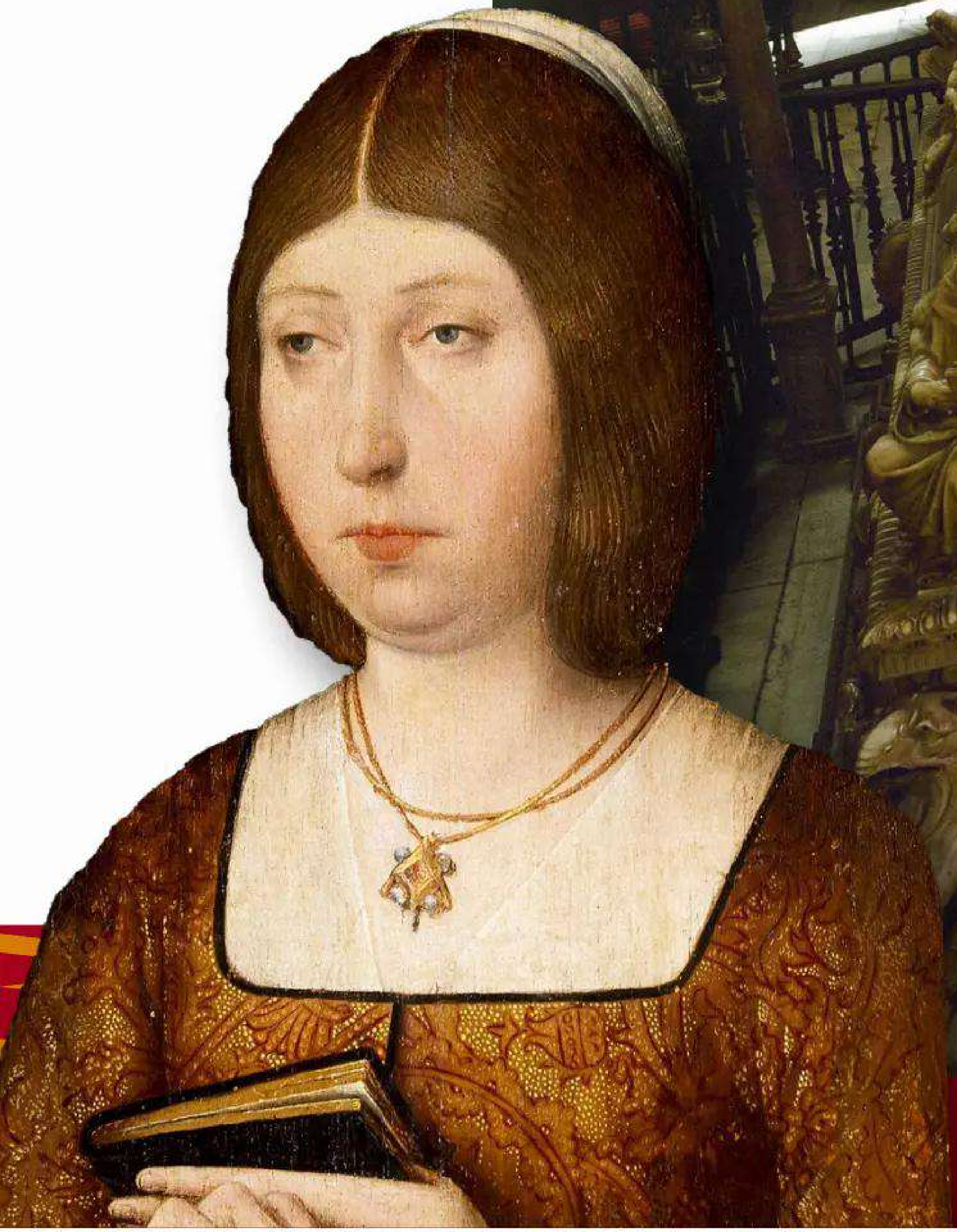
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

As well as achieving many of their domestic goals, Isabella and Ferdinand worked hard to secure the new united Spain a reputation as a powerhouse internationally. Throughout their marriage, Isabella had birthed seven children in total, five of whom survived childhood and as young adults served as important pawns in their parents' foreign policy plans. To secure political and familial alliances with the influential players of Europe at the time, the Spanish monarchs viewed their children's marriages as strategic, and had educated them all in the humanist fashion to prepare them for lives as rulers.

Their eldest daughter Isabella married Afonso, the heir to the Portuguese throne and grandson of King Afonso V, as had been agreed when Isabella and Ferdinand won the War of the Castilian Succession against Afonso V's Portuguese forces. Sadly this marriage ended when Prince Afonso died prematurely, and subsequently Princess Isabella was married to the next Portuguese heir, Prince Manuel. Isabella died giving birth to their son, Miguel de Paz, who also died before he was two years old. After Princess Isabella's death, Ferdinand and Isabella maintained their ties with the Portuguese royals by marrying another daughter, Maria, to her sister's widower. Manuel and Maria went on to become the King and Queen of Portugal and had ten children together. Ferdinand and Isabella's son, John, married a Habsburg princess, while their daughter Juana was matched with a Habsburg prince. Their youngest daughter, Catherine, more commonly remembered as Catherine of Aragon, helped Spain form an alliance with England when she was first married to Prince Arthur Tudor, before he died and she was married to his brother, Henry, the future King Henry VIII.

THE END OF THE PARTNERSHIP

Isabella I of Castile died in 1504, leaving behind a unified Christian Spain. Though her methods may have been brutal, she achieved exactly what she had set out to do and had done so despite a turbulent start to her reign, and as a female ruler in a time when men dominated European politics. Upon her death, Isabella's body was taken to Granada, a final and fitting symbol of her victory over the previously Muslim stronghold, where she was interred at a monastery. Ferdinand later joined her when he died in 1516, despite the fact that he had remarried after Isabella's death. Their bodies now lie together, entombed at the Royal Chapel at Granada, beside the tomb of their daughter Juana and son-in-law Philip, and the coffin of their infant grandson, Miguel da Paz. ○



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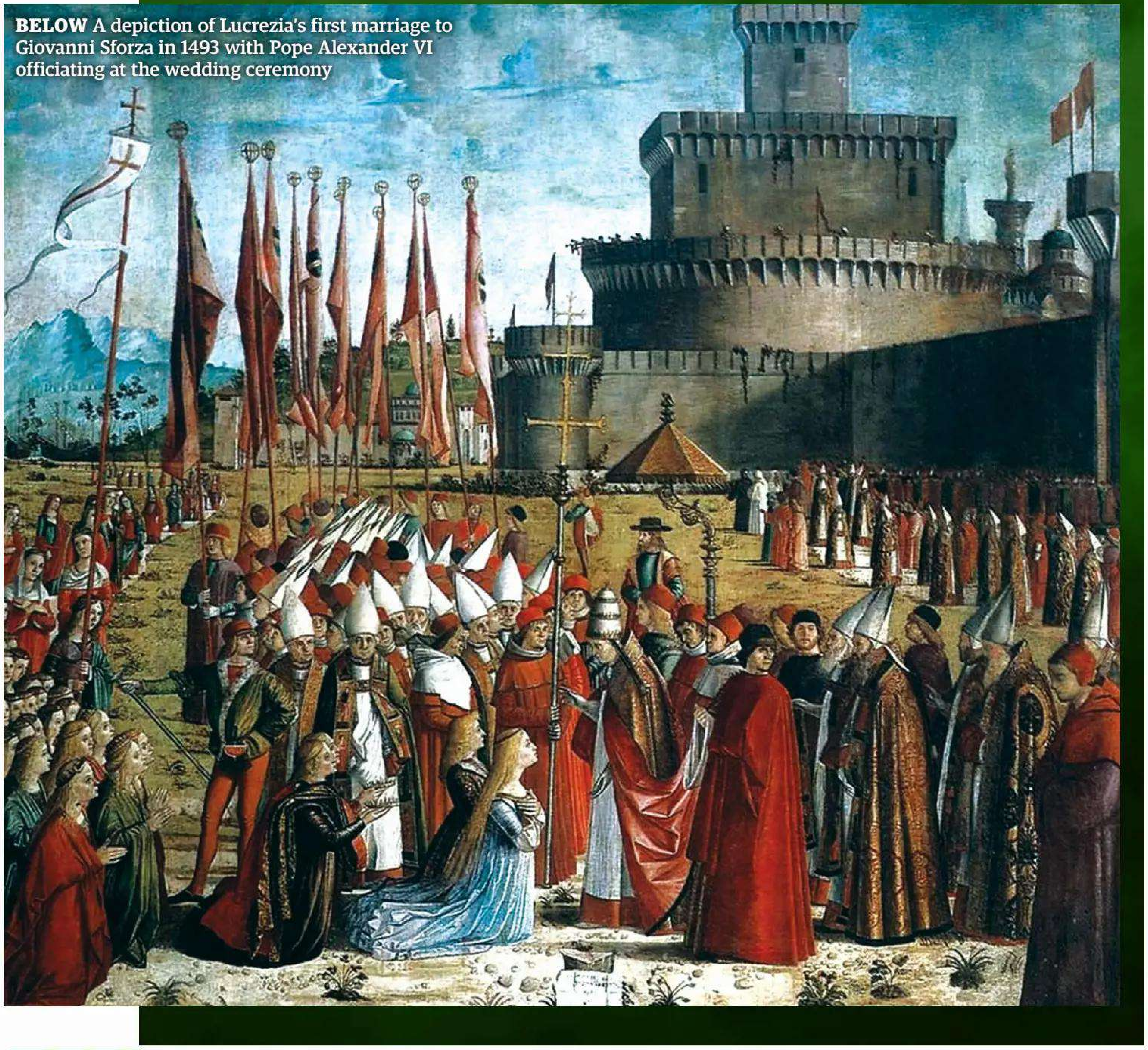
LUCREZIA BORGIA

THE POISON PRINCESS?

Does this Renaissance duchess, daughter of a scandalous pope, deserve her infamous reputation?

Written by Tom Garner


BELOW A depiction of Lucrezia's first marriage to Giovanni Sforza in 1493 with Pope Alexander VI officiating at the wedding ceremony

The word "Borgia" has come to define a particular kind of Renaissance decadence. Associated with sexual and violent scandals at the heart of the papacy, the Borgia family was dominated by three infamous figures, Pope Alexander VI and his two most prominent children: Cesare and Lucrezia.

Celebrated in her time as a beautiful young woman with long, blonde hair and a fair complexion, Lucrezia is often regarded as the original femme fatale. She is largely known today as a notorious figure, surrounded by rumours of incest, murders and even poisonings. However, is her infamy justified or has Lucrezia Borgia been wrongly maligned by history?

THE POPE'S DAUGHTER

A Spanish noble family, the Borgias rose to prominence in Italy when Cardinal Alfonso de Borgia was elected as Pope Callixtus III in 1455. Although Callixtus only reigned for three years until his death in 1458, Borgia influence in Rome continued under his nephew, Rodrigo Borgia. A cardinal like his uncle, Rodrigo was himself elected as pope in 1492 and took the regnal name of Alexander VI.

As the head of the Roman Catholic Church, popes were sworn to a vow of celibacy, but this held little meaning to the lascivious Alexander who had several mistresses. While serving as a cardinal, he had a long-term relationship with an Italian tavern landlady called Vannozza dei Cattanei. With Vannozza, the then Rodrigo sired four children during the 1470s-80s. Of the four children, three were boys (Cesare, Giovanni and Goffredo) while the third-born child was a girl: Lucrezia.

> "Thanks to these portrayals in popular culture, the real Lucrezia has become blurred with her dark reputation"

BELOW Holliday Grainger depicted Lucrezia in the Emmy-winning TV series *The Borgias* alongside Jeremy Irons who played Alexander VI

Born near Rome in 1480, Lucrezia was treated as a princess - despite her illegitimacy - and she received a superb education from the intellectuals of the papal court. Fluent in four languages, (Spanish, Italian, French and Catalan), Lucrezia could also read Latin and Greek and was proficient in music and literature.

Although she was highly educated, Lucrezia's primary purpose was to be married to a suitable nobleman to continue her family's ambitions. At the age of just 13, she was married in 1493 to Giovanni Sforza, Lord of Pesaro and Gradara. Theirs was not a love match and the marriage was annulled in 1497 on the grounds of Sforza's alleged impotence.

However, before the annulment, Sforza accused Lucrezia of incest with her father. This was the first of a series of scandalous rumours that were attached to Lucrezia. During the annulment process, it was also alleged that she had had an affair with Alexander's chamberlain, Pedro Calderon. The bodies of Calderon and a maid were soon found dead in the River Tiber in February 1498. Speculation abounded that her older brother, Cesare, had killed the pair in order to prevent Lucrezia being embroiled into further scandal. However, Sforza's original accusation against Lucrezia gained momentum.

One month after Calderon's death, an illegitimate child was born into the House of Borgia. Named Giovanni, the boy's parentage was unclear with many speculating that he was Lucrezia's son. The father's identification was open to wild rumours. It included Calderon but also - most scandalously - Cesare or Alexander VI. The truth cannot be fully known, although it is also likely that Giovanni's parents were Alexander and an unknown Italian woman.

CESARE AND ALFONSO

In the same year of Giovanni's birth, Lucrezia was married for a second time to Alfonso of Aragon, Duke of Bisceglie and Prince of Salerno. Unlike her marriage to Sforza, Lucrezia was reputed to be happy with Alfonso and gave birth to a son called Rodrigo in November 1499. However, their union would not last long - possibly thanks to the machinations of Lucrezia's older brother.

Cesare Borgia had originally been a cardinal but resigned his position to become a *condottiero* (mercenary leader) of papal armies in the service of both his father and King Louis XII of France against other Italian states. A ruthless man, he was ▶

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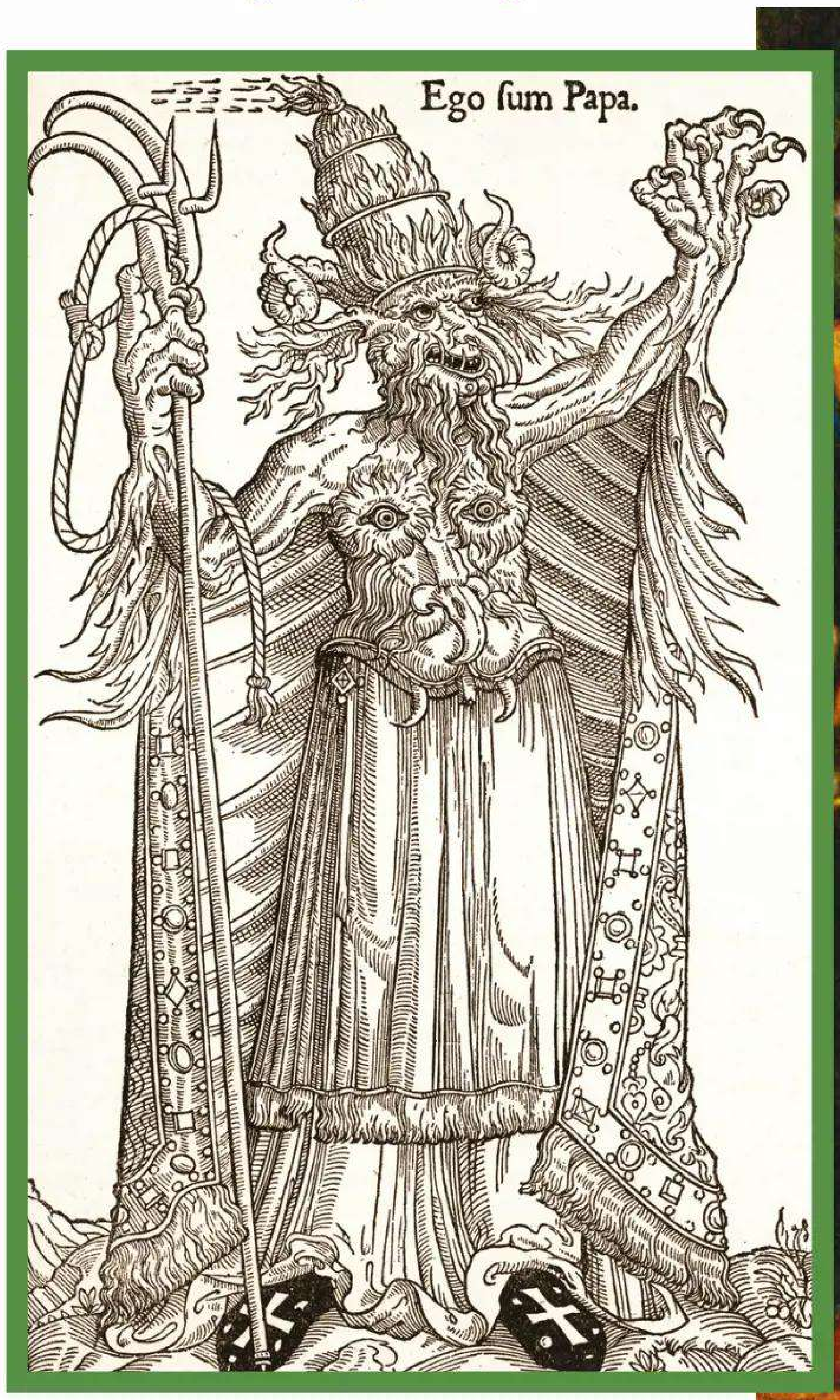
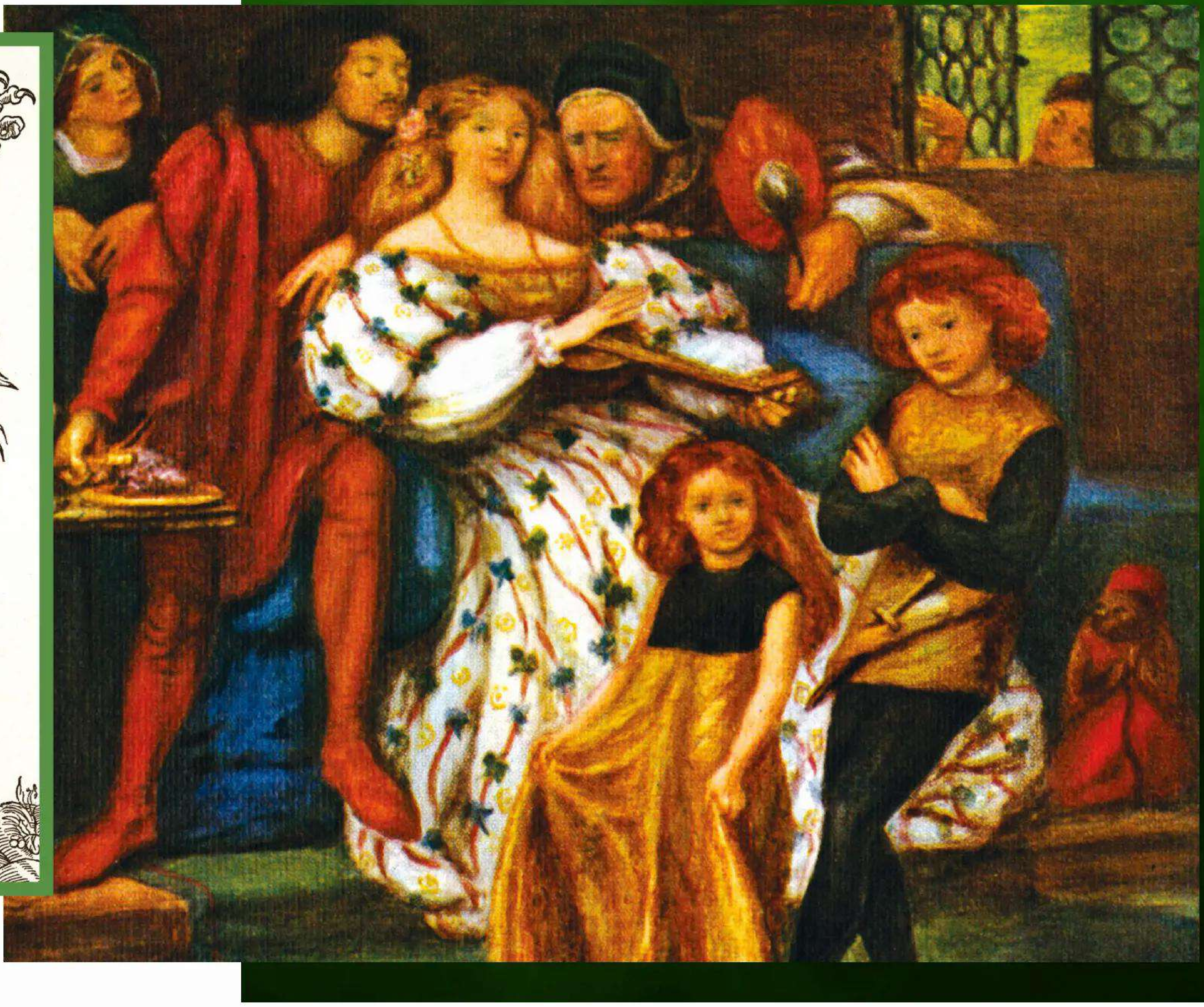

Ego ſum Papa.



also very close to his sister Lucrezia and may have become jealous of her marriage to Alfonso.

Already linked by rumour to Calderon's death, Cesare was again implicated when Alfonso was attacked and severely wounded in Rome in July 1500. Lucrezia nursed her husband but within a few weeks he was attacked again. Alfonso was strangled to death in his bed on 18 August 1500 by a Spanish *condottiero* called Micheletto Corella. Lucrezia had been talking to Alfonso when Corella burst in. The assassin distracted her by lying that her father needed to see her immediately and when Lucrezia returned home, Alfonso was dead.

It is likely that Cesare was behind Alfonso's murder while Lucrezia deeply mourned her husband. However, she could not grieve for long because Alexander soon arranged a third marriage with Lucrezia marrying Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara in 1502. This union was a marriage of convenience based on respect rather than love. Lucrezia bore Ferrara eight children, although both committed adultery with other partners.

BANQUET OF CHESTNUTS

In between her second and third marriage, Lucrezia was implicated in one of the Borgias' most infamous scandals known as the 'Banquet of Chestnuts'. Reputedly held in the Vatican's Apostolic Palace on 31 October 1501, the 'banquet' was actually rumoured to be an orgy hosted by Cesare. 50 'courtesans' (sex workers) supposedly entertained guests by dancing naked and picking up chestnuts from the floor. Alexander and Lucrezia were also rumoured to be in attendance, but the veracity of this event is questioned. The only account of the banquet was written by Johann Burchard, Alexander's papal Master of Ceremonies, but many historians consider the event to be implausible.

There were also persistent rumours that Lucrezia owned a hollow ring that she used to poison drinks, but this again is most likely simply an attempt by the Borgias' many enemies to discredit her and her family. Indeed, in the later part of her life Lucrezia was, by all accounts, almost a model of a Renaissance princess.

> "There were also persistent rumours that Lucrezia owned a hollow ring that she used to poison drinks"

ABOVE-LEFT Pope Alexander VI was depicted as a devil for his scandalous behaviour in this Parisian broadsheet woodcut dating from c.1500

ABOVE-RIGHT An 1863 painting of the Borgias (with Lucrezia in the centre), thought to be depicting the family's scheming, murderous nature

BELOW Did Lucrezia really own a hollow ring like this one, to stealthily poison drinks? Or was this merely a malicious rumour?

"PEARL ON THIS EARTH"

From 1503, Lucrezia's life changed considerably when her father died. Alexander's death deprived her of papal protection while Cesare was later killed in a skirmish in 1507. The power of the Borgias was seemingly broken, but Lucrezia was a canny political survivor. Alexander had appointed her as governor of Spoleto in 1499 and she had also effectively ruled the Vatican while her father was temporarily absent in 1501. In both cases, she had proven to be an intelligent ruler and this experience now served her well.

As Ferrara's wife, Lucrezia used her political experience to administer his duchy when he was away and she was a noted patron of the arts. Such was her success that a famous French soldier called the Chevalier de Bayard described Lucrezia as a "pearl on this Earth".

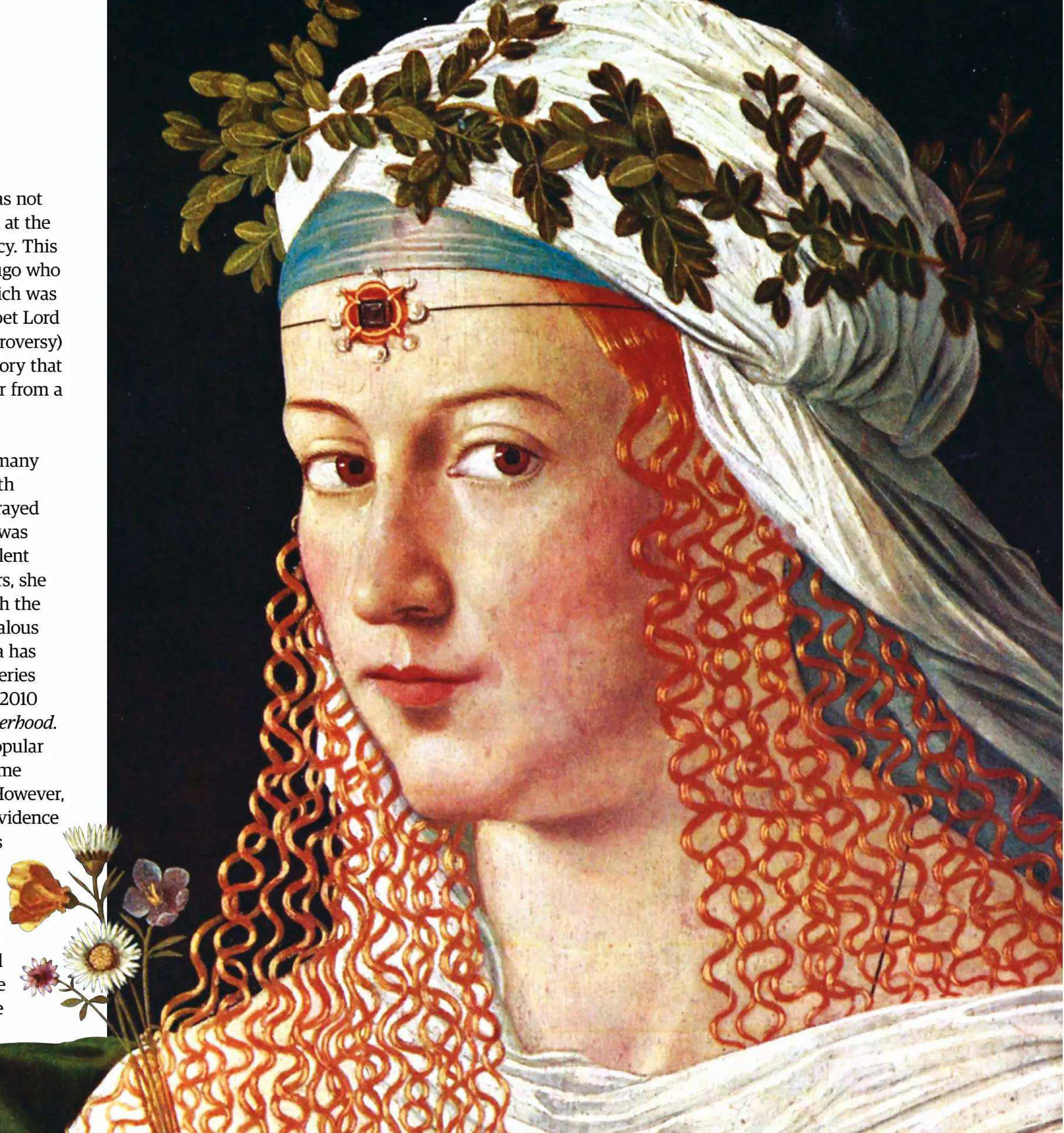
Lucrezia died on 24 June 1519 aged 39 from complications after giving birth to her tenth child. Overall, despite the bloodthirsty atmosphere she had grown up in, she had survived to become a respected noblewoman in the last years of her life. Nevertheless, the rumours about Lucrezia persisted long after her death and the infamy of the Borgias ensured she became a focus of interest to writers and artists.

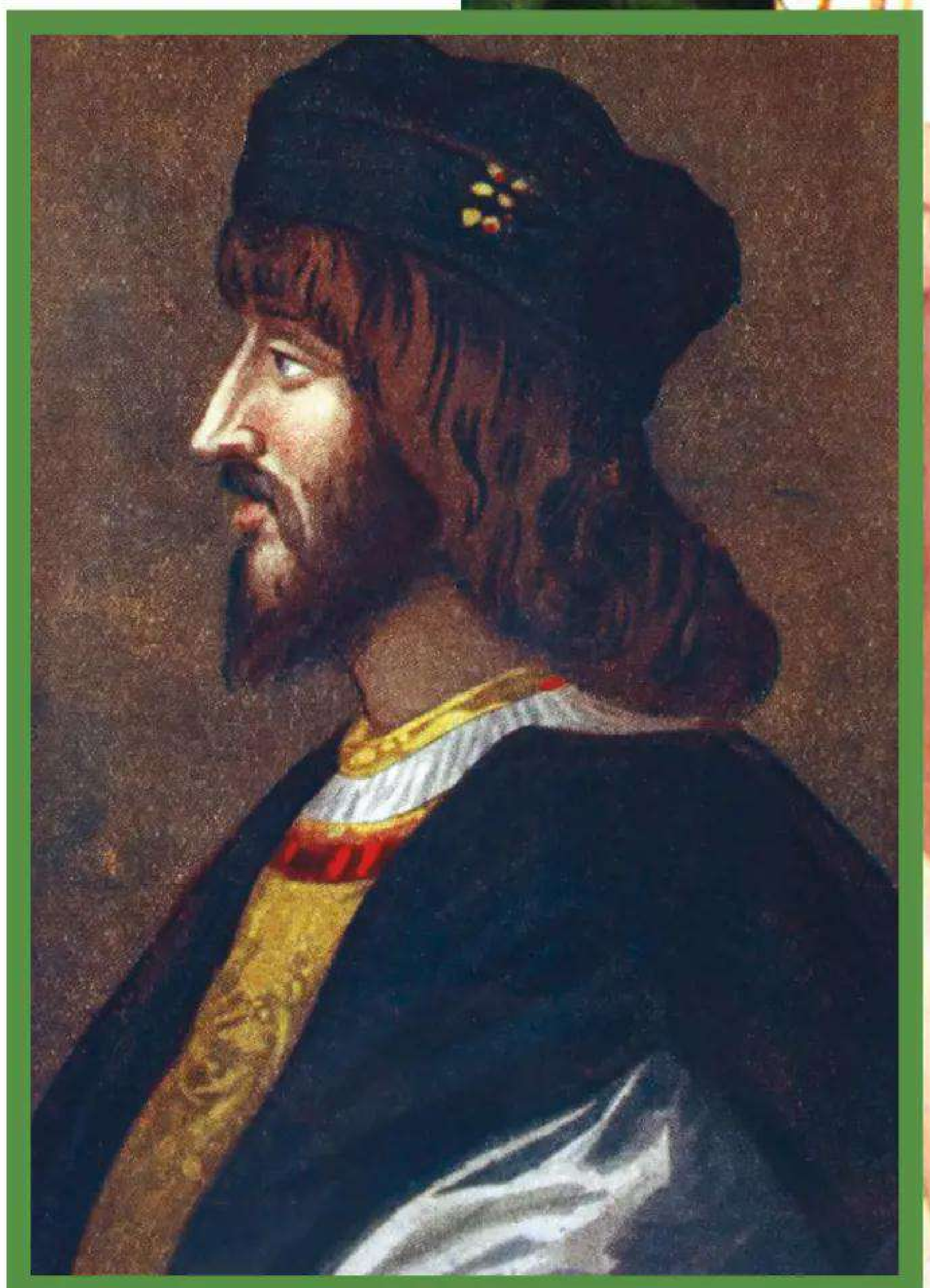
BYRON, HUGO AND MORE

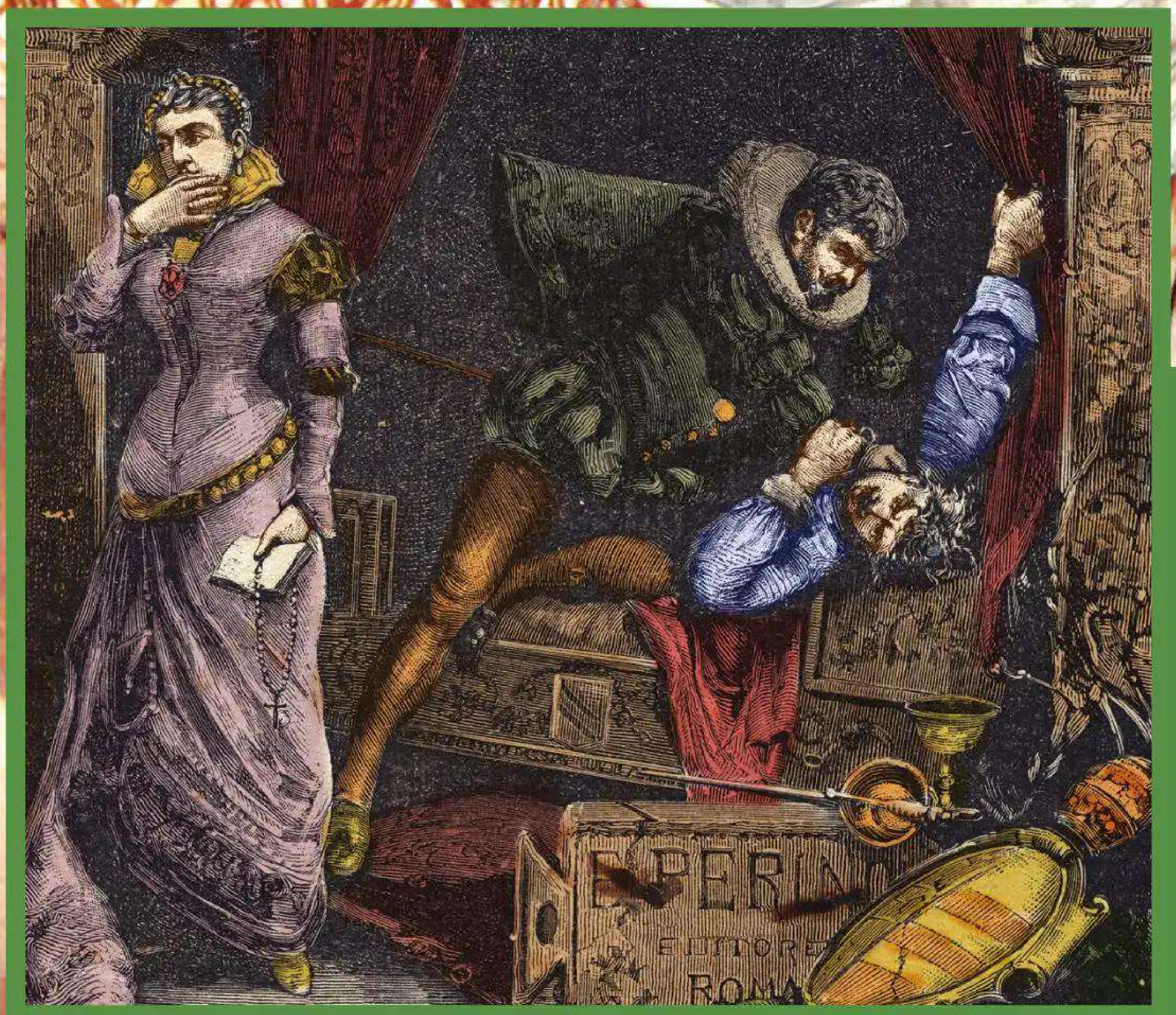
During the 16th century, the Spanish Borgias received hostility from Italian sources who viewed them as upstart outsiders. Lucrezia in particular was not only an outsider but also a woman at the heart of the male-dominated papacy. This intrigued writers such as Victor Hugo who wrote a play about her in 1833, which was later adapted into an opera. The poet Lord Byron (himself no stranger to controversy) was so enamoured by Lucrezia's story that he reputedly stole a lock of her hair from a surviving letter.

The fascination with Lucrezia's supposed infamy continued with many novels written about her in the 20th century. She also began to be portrayed in films and television, where she was initially the subject of a German silent film in 1922. Over the next 60 years, she was portrayed in several films, with the majority portraying her as a scandalous figure. In the 21st century, Lucrezia has been a major character in the TV series *The Borgias* (2011-13) and even the 2010 video game *Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood*.

Thanks to these portrayals in popular culture, the real Lucrezia has become blurred with her dark reputation. However, there is ultimately no conclusive evidence that Lucrezia was guilty of the acts she was accused of. Instead, the evidence points to an intelligent, cultured woman who survived in a violent man's world that was full of danger. That she ultimately died as a respected pillar of Renaissance society indicates that she has more likely been the posthumous victim of malicious gossip and rumour that has lasted for centuries. ○







ABOVE Due to many scandalous rumours, Lucrezia has an infamous reputation

FAR-LEFT Cesare Borgia's political machinations were a major inspiration for the 1532 treatise *The Prince* by Niccolò Machiavelli, who personally spent time with him

LEFT An assassin murdered Lucrezia's second husband, thought to be on Cesare's orders

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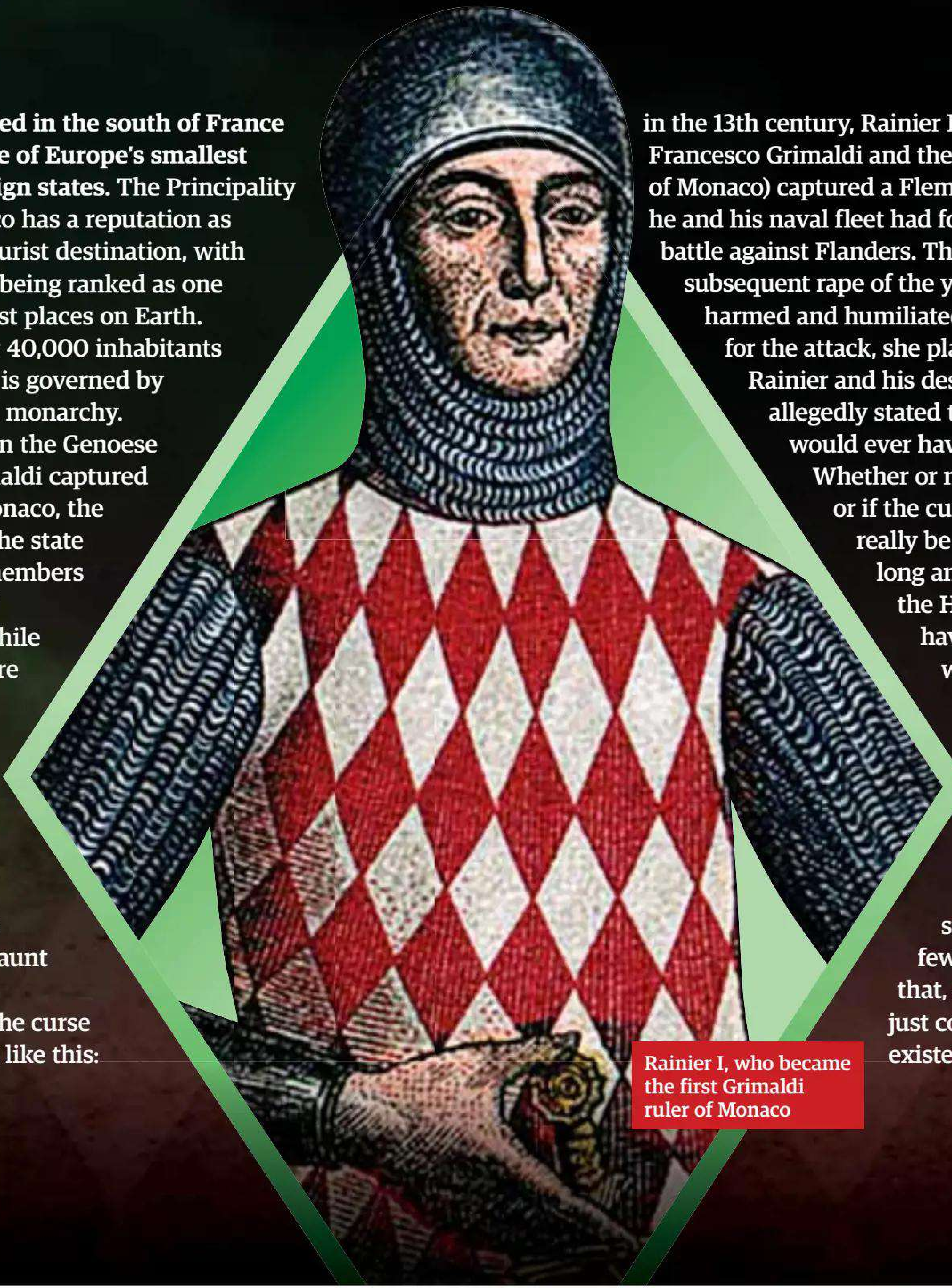
The Curse of The Grimaldis

Did the spell of a medieval witch doom the royal family of Monaco for centuries to come?

Written by Emily Staniforth



Rainier I, who became the first Grimaldi ruler of Monaco

Nestled in the south of France is one of Europe's smallest sovereign states. The Principality of Monaco has a reputation as a luxury tourist destination, with the tiny area being ranked as one of the wealthiest places on Earth. With just under 40,000 inhabitants today, the state is governed by a constitutional monarchy. Since 1297, when the Genoese Francesco Grimaldi captured the castle of Monaco, the royal rulers of the state have all been members of the House of Grimaldi and while the Grimaldis are known as one of the oldest royal houses of Europe, they have also become famous for the notorious curse that is said to haunt the family.

The story of the curse goes something like this: in the 13th century, Rainier I (the cousin of Francesco Grimaldi and the first sovereign ruler of Monaco) captured a Flemish maiden after he and his naval fleet had fought a successful battle against Flanders. The abduction and subsequent rape of the young woman saw her harmed and humiliated and, in retaliation for the attack, she placed a hex on Rainier and his descendants. The curse allegedly stated that no Grimaldi would ever have a happy marriage. Whether or not this story is true, or if the curse is real, can never really be proven. But, in their long and illustrious history, the House of Grimaldi have, in accordance with the legend of the curse, tended to be unlucky in love, and have experienced generations of tragic events. Here are the stories of just a few of the Grimaldis that, after reading, may just convince you of the existence of the curse. ▶

DEO JUVANTE

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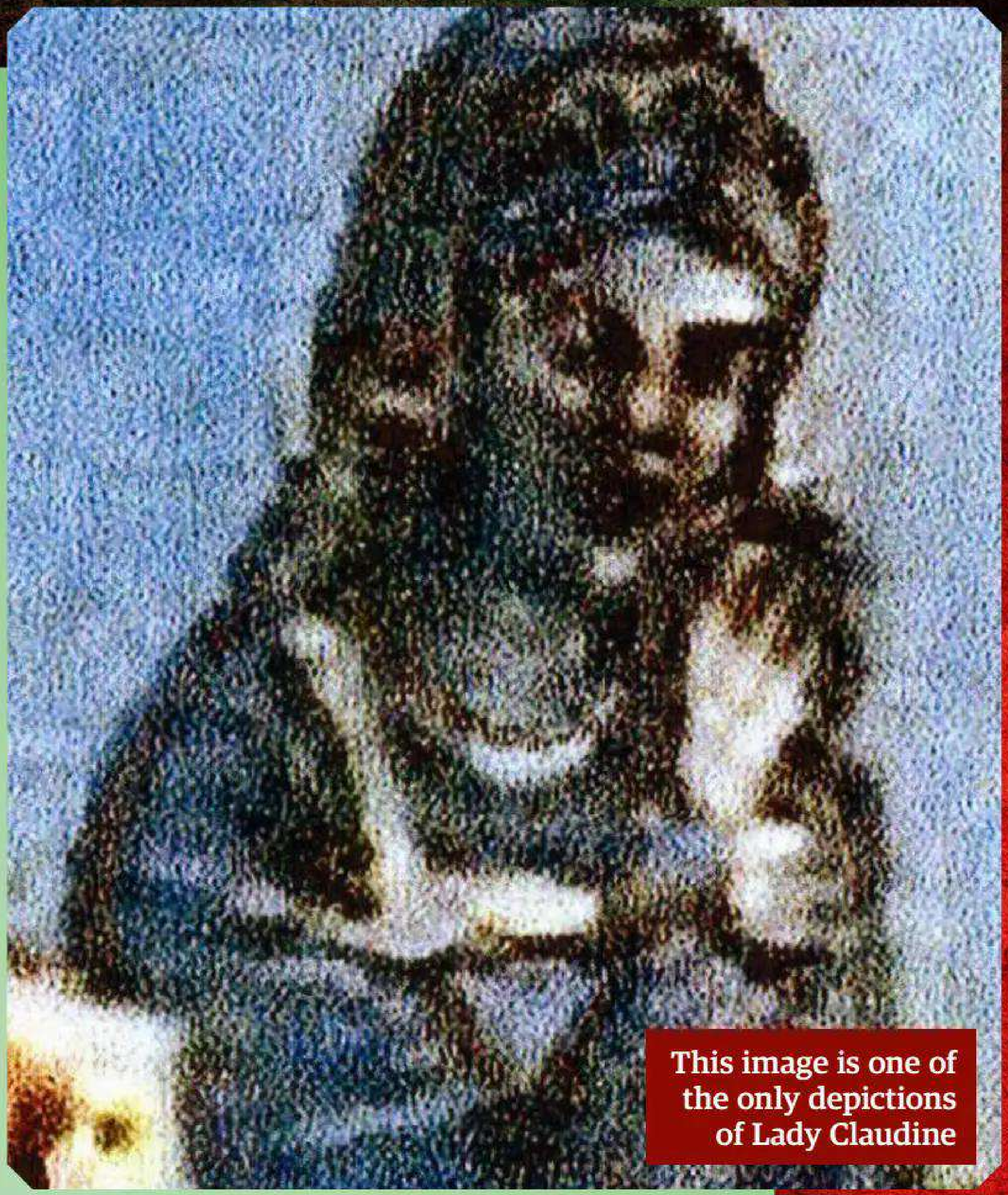
The Tragic Lady of Monaco

LADY CLAUDINE'S HUSBAND DENIED HER THE TITLE THAT WAS RIGHTFULLY HERS

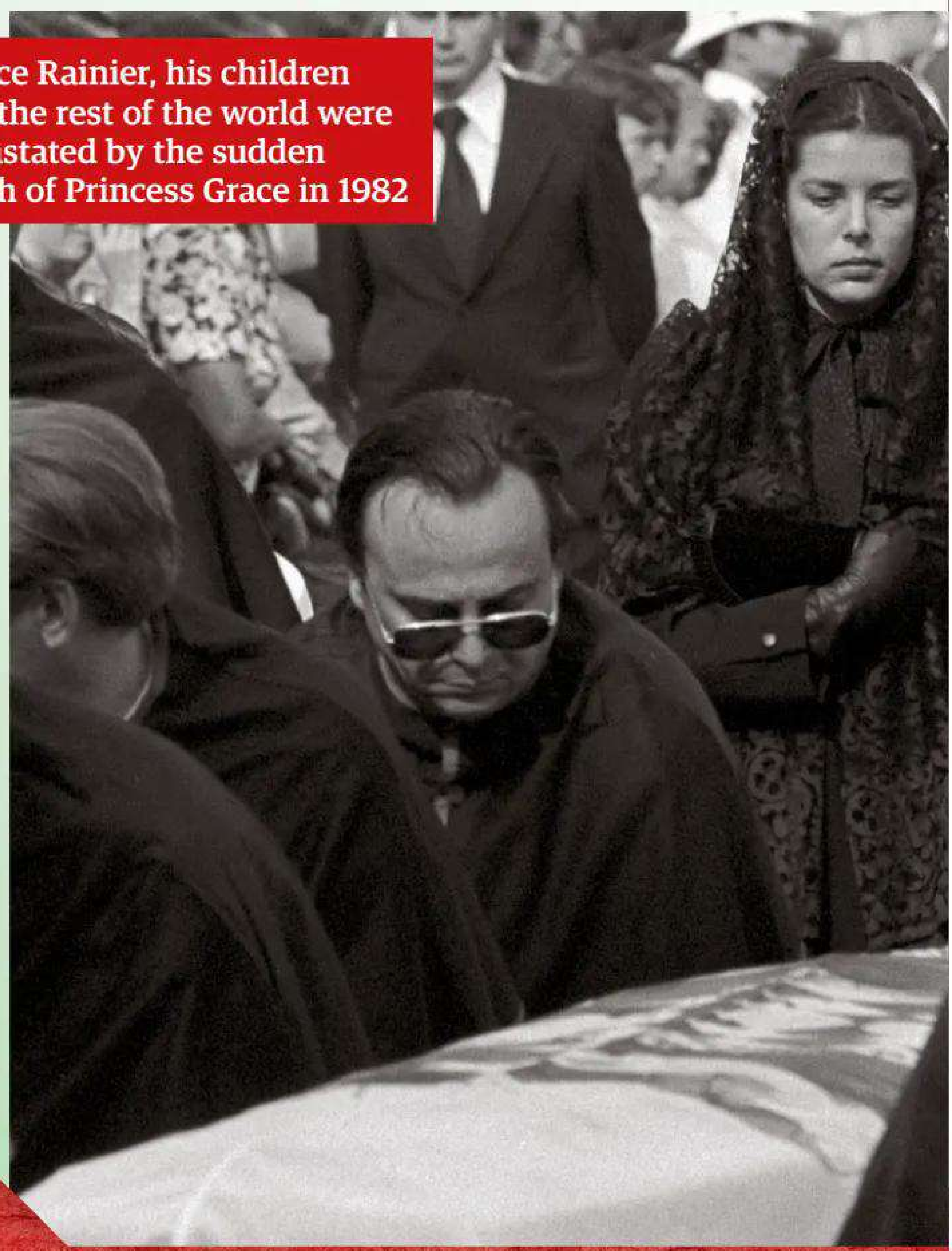

This image is one of the only depictions of Lady Claudine

Though the marriage of Claudine, Lady of Monaco was described by her contemporaries as a happy one, the relationship between her and her husband, Lambert Grimaldi di Antibes, was certainly contentious. In 1457, at the age of six, Claudine ascended to the throne of Monaco after the deaths of both her parents. As the only child of Catalan Grimaldi and his wife Blanche del Carretto, it was far from ideal that she was a girl. However, the rules of succession, as laid out by Claudine's grandfather Jean I, stated that a female Grimaldi could rule if they kept the Grimaldi name. As a result, the Grimaldi name would be passed down to her children, and her husband would be required to adopt the family name himself. In Claudine's case, this was not a problem with Lambert being her distant cousin and already carrying the Grimaldi title.

As Claudine was six years old when she came to power, a regent was appointed to oversee her duties until she became of age. Claudine's grandmother, Pomellina Fregoso, had been named in Catalan's will as his daughter's regent, which had also named Lambert as his daughter's future husband. Dissatisfied with the regency arrangement, Lambert decided to take matters into his own hands, ousted Pomellina from power and claimed the throne for himself. Though Lambert did not marry Claudine until 1465 when she was older, he had himself declared sovereign Lord of Monaco in 1458 and in the process deposed his soon-to-be wife. Thus, Claudine lost many of her rights as the ruling sovereign and instead, upon her marriage, became consort to her husband.

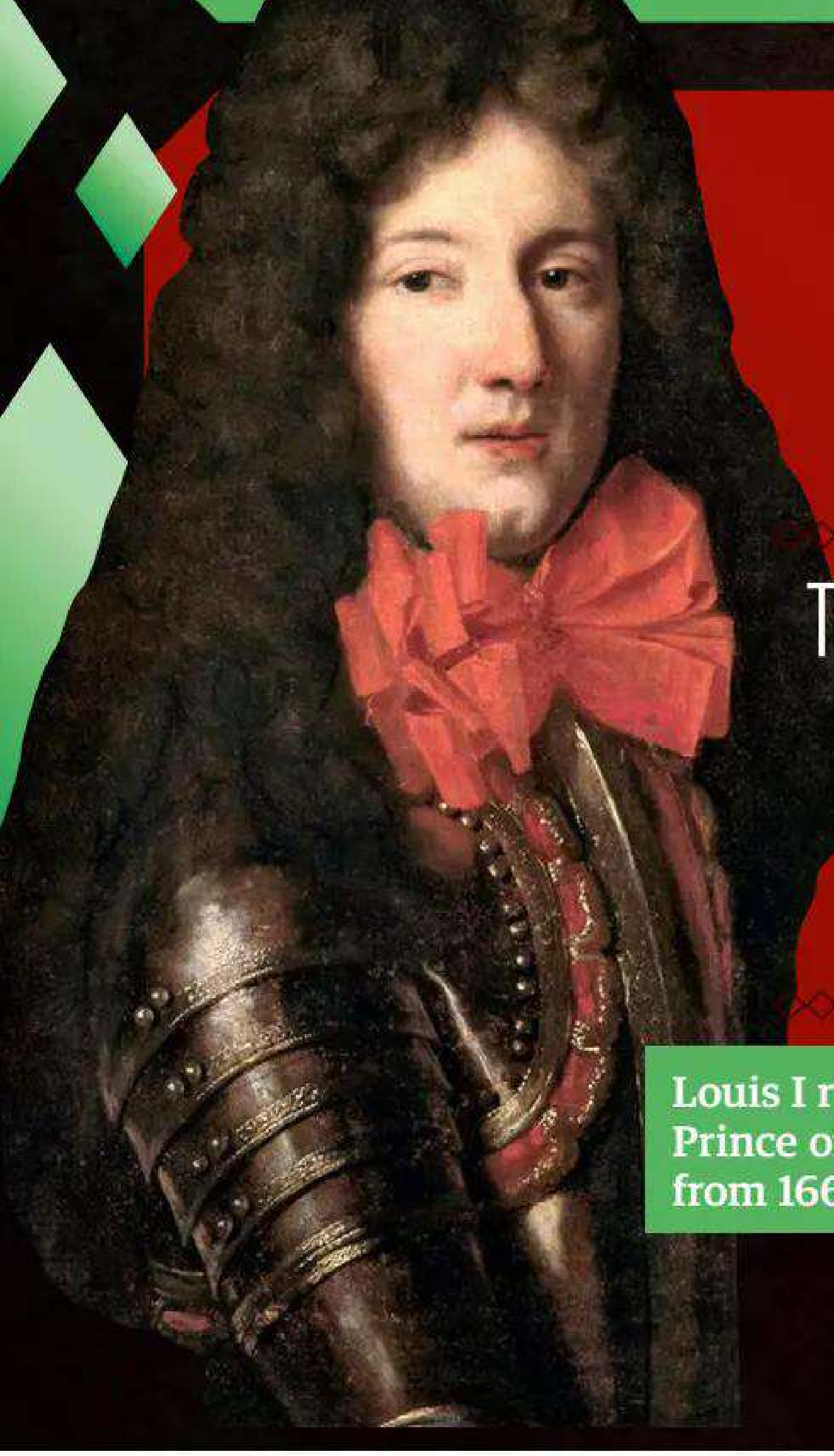
Claudine may have lost her power due to her husband's coup, but things only got worse for her after his death. When Lambert died in 1494, their eldest son, Jean II, became Lord of Monaco. Jean's 11-year reign ended abruptly when a fight broke out between him and his younger brother Lucien. Claudine allegedly witnessed the altercation in which Jean was stabbed to death by his brother. Despite there being many supposed political motives for Lucien to have murdered Jean, historians have been unable to conclude a definitive reason for the killing. Lucien succeeded his brother as Lord of Monaco, and poor Claudine, having had her title taken from her, had also been subjected to watching one of her own children kill another.

The wedding of Grace Kelly and Prince Rainier III on 19 April 1956 was a grand affair


Prince Rainier, his children and the rest of the world were devastated by the sudden death of Princess Grace in 1982

Prince Louis' Wanton Wife

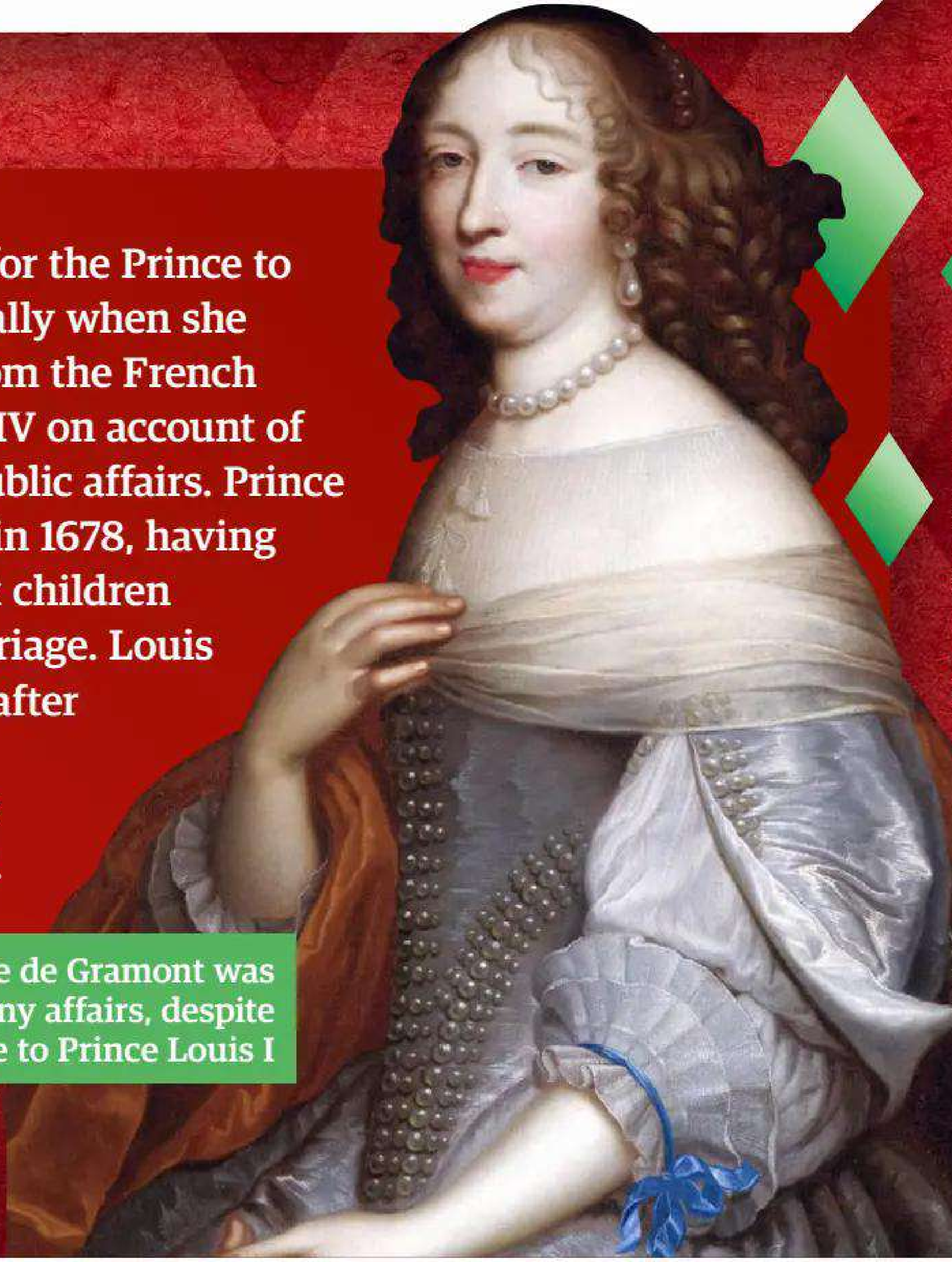
THE WIFE OF LOUIS I OF MONACO CAUSED SHOCK AND SCANDAL THROUGH HER HIGH-PROFILE ROMANTIC LIAISONS


Louis I ruled as Prince of Monaco from 1662-1701

Another member of the House of Grimaldi with an unfortunate love life was the 17th century Prince of Monaco, Louis I. Ruling from 1662 to his death in 1701, Louis' reign saw him develop a close relationship with King Louis XIV through which he strengthened the alliance between Monaco and France. Prince Louis, as well as being Monaco's sovereign, also held the hereditary French title of the Duke of Valentinois – an honour that had first been bestowed upon his grandfather and predecessor Honoré II (the first to call himself Prince of Monaco rather than Lord). With such a close connection to the French, Prince Louis spent much of his time at the French court of Versailles. It was here that he and his wife, Catherine Charlotte de Gramont, whom he married in 1660, spent a lot of their early married life and where they returned after spending a few years back in Monaco upon Louis' succession to the throne.

Unfortunately for Prince Louis, he was not the only Grimaldi to capture the attention of the Sun King. It became apparent that the beautiful and clever Catherine Charlotte had attracted the notice of Louis XIV, and she eventually became the king's mistress. Prince Louis' wife sleeping with the French King certainly had its political benefits for Monaco and for Louis's own status, but sadly for the Prince, Louis XIV was not the only man who Catherine Charlotte had her eye on. Throughout their marriage, it is believed that Catherine Charlotte engaged in romantic affairs with a number of different French aristocrats, even earning her the nickname "Catherine the Torrent". She is said to have slept with men such as Nicolas de Neufville, the Duke of Villeroy, as well as her own relative Antonin Nompar de Caumont, the Duke of Lauzun, the latter of whom was punished by Louis XIV for his relationship with Catherine Charlotte by a stint locked up in the Bastille.

Described as "greedy for pleasure", Catherine Charlotte could not have been an easy woman for the Prince to live with, especially when she was banished from the French court by Louis XIV on account of her numerous public affairs. Prince Louis' wife died in 1678, having given birth to six children during their marriage. Louis did not remarry after his wife's death despite living for another 23 years.


Catherine Charlotte de Gramont was known for her many affairs, despite her marriage to Prince Louis I

A Doomed Hollywood Romance

THE MOST FAMOUS GRIMALDI MARRIAGE ENDED IN A TRAGIC ACCIDENT

Of all the love stories from the history of the House of Grimaldi, one always springs to mind. In 1955, one of Hollywood's most beloved and glamorous movie stars attended the Cannes Film Festival where she was introduced to the reigning Prince of Monaco. Sparks flew between 26-year-old Grace Kelly and 31-year-old Prince Rainier III, and though they kept their romance secret for a while, they were married within a year of meeting. While the tale of the Prince and the movie star may seem like a perfect fairytale, there have been suggestions that Prince Rainier, who ruled Monaco from 1949 to 2005, had been looking for a celebrity bride to marry in order to boost the reputation and status of Monaco, which was struggling at the time. Furthermore, in order to marry into Monaco's royal family, Kelly had to give up her career as an Oscar-winning actress to take up royal duties and, apparently, pay a wedding dowry of a whopping $2 million. The couple's grand wedding was an incredibly high-profile affair, with celebrations lasting a total of eight days, and the wedding itself happening over a two-day period.

Aside from all the gossip and rumours that inevitably circulated around the high-profile marriage, it seems as though the union between Princess Grace and Prince Rainier was a generally happy one. Together they had three children – Caroline, Albert and Stéphanie – and though it is thought that several attempts were made by Hollywood directors and producers to entice Kelly back to her acting career, Kelly remained committed to her work as Princess of Monaco. It seemed that Kelly and Prince Rainier's marriage would stand the test of time, and that Prince Rainier had escaped the Grimaldi curse. But that all changed when tragedy struck on 13 September 1982.

While driving her youngest daughter, Stéphanie, to the train station, Princess Grace suffered a stroke which caused her to lose control of the car. The car, with Princess Grace and 17-year-old Stéphanie inside, drove off the side of a winding road and down an embankment. Luckily, Stéphanie escaped the accident with minor injuries, but her mother never recovered. The following day, the world went into mourning when Princess Grace died of a brain haemorrhage at the age of just 52. The death of Grace Kelly came as a shock to all, especially her husband who never quite recovered from the loss of his wife, according to their son Prince Albert: "It was pretty obvious that he was deeply affected and he wasn't quite the same man as he was before the accident." After Princess Grace's death, Prince Rainier III never remarried. He died in 2005 at the age of 81 and was buried next to his late wife in the Grimaldi family vault in the Cathedral of Monaco. Stéphanie also struggled to come to terms with her mother's death, having survived the accident that killed her. It was after Princess Grace's sudden and tragic death that the tale of the Grimaldi curse came to the attention of the wider world. ▶

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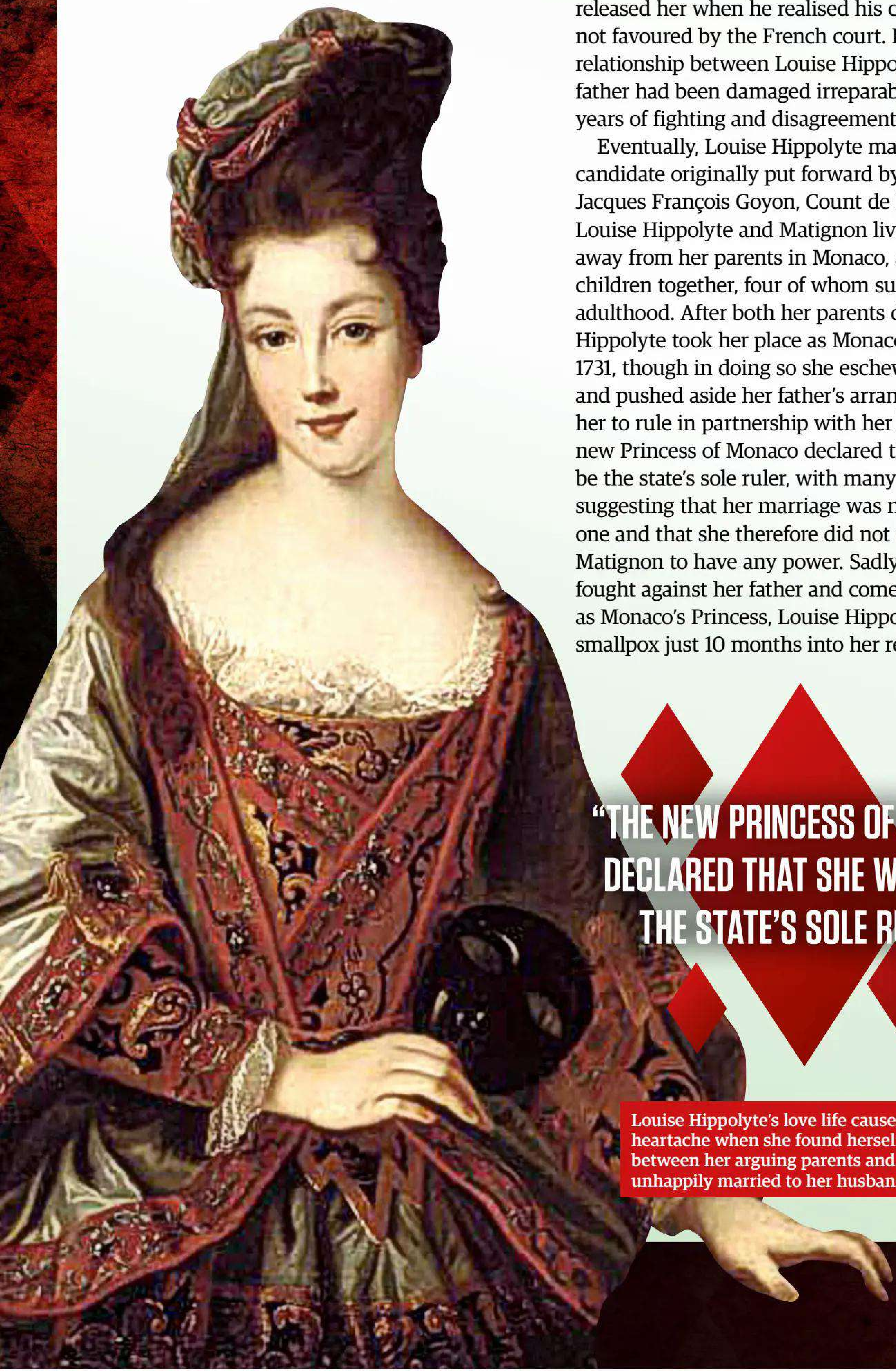
Stuck in the Middle

LOUISE HIPPOLYTE GRIMALDI'S MARRIAGE BECAME THE CENTRE OF A FAMILIAL FIGHT

The question of marriage for Princess Louise Hippolyte became a huge issue that drove a wedge between her and her parents. The oldest surviving daughter of Antonio I and his wife Marie de Lorraine-Armagnac, Louise Hippolyte was the heiress to the throne of Monaco on account of the fact that she did not have any brothers. It was decided that upon her marriage, her husband would take the Grimaldi name and the couple would rule side by side. But, when it came to choosing a husband for Louise Hippolyte, her parents could not agree on a candidate. Antonio's suggestion was disliked by his wife, who had another man in mind for her daughter, and their incapability to concur resulted in a two-year-long argument between the pair. Louise Hippolyte, on her mother's advice, refused to marry her father's choice of man and in retaliation Antonio had his daughter confined to a convent for two years before he released her when he realised his candidate was not favoured by the French court. However, the relationship between Louise Hippolyte and her father had been damaged irreparably after their years of fighting and disagreements.

Eventually, Louise Hippolyte married the candidate originally put forward by her mother, Jacques François Goyon, Count de Matignon. Louise Hippolyte and Matignon lived in France, away from her parents in Monaco, and had nine children together, four of whom survived into adulthood. After both her parents died, Louise Hippolyte took her place as Monaco's ruler in 1731, though in doing so she eschewed Matignon and pushed aside her father's arrangements for her to rule in partnership with her husband. The new Princess of Monaco declared that she would be the state's sole ruler, with many historians suggesting that her marriage was not a happy one and that she therefore did not wish to allow Matignon to have any power. Sadly, having fought against her father and come into her own as Monaco's Princess, Louise Hippolyte died of smallpox just 10 months into her reign.

> "THE NEW PRINCESS OF MONACO DECLARED THAT SHE WOULD BE THE STATE'S SOLE RULER"



Louise Hippolyte's love life caused misery and heartache when she found herself trapped between her arguing parents and subsequently unhappily married to her husband

Karma for Lucien

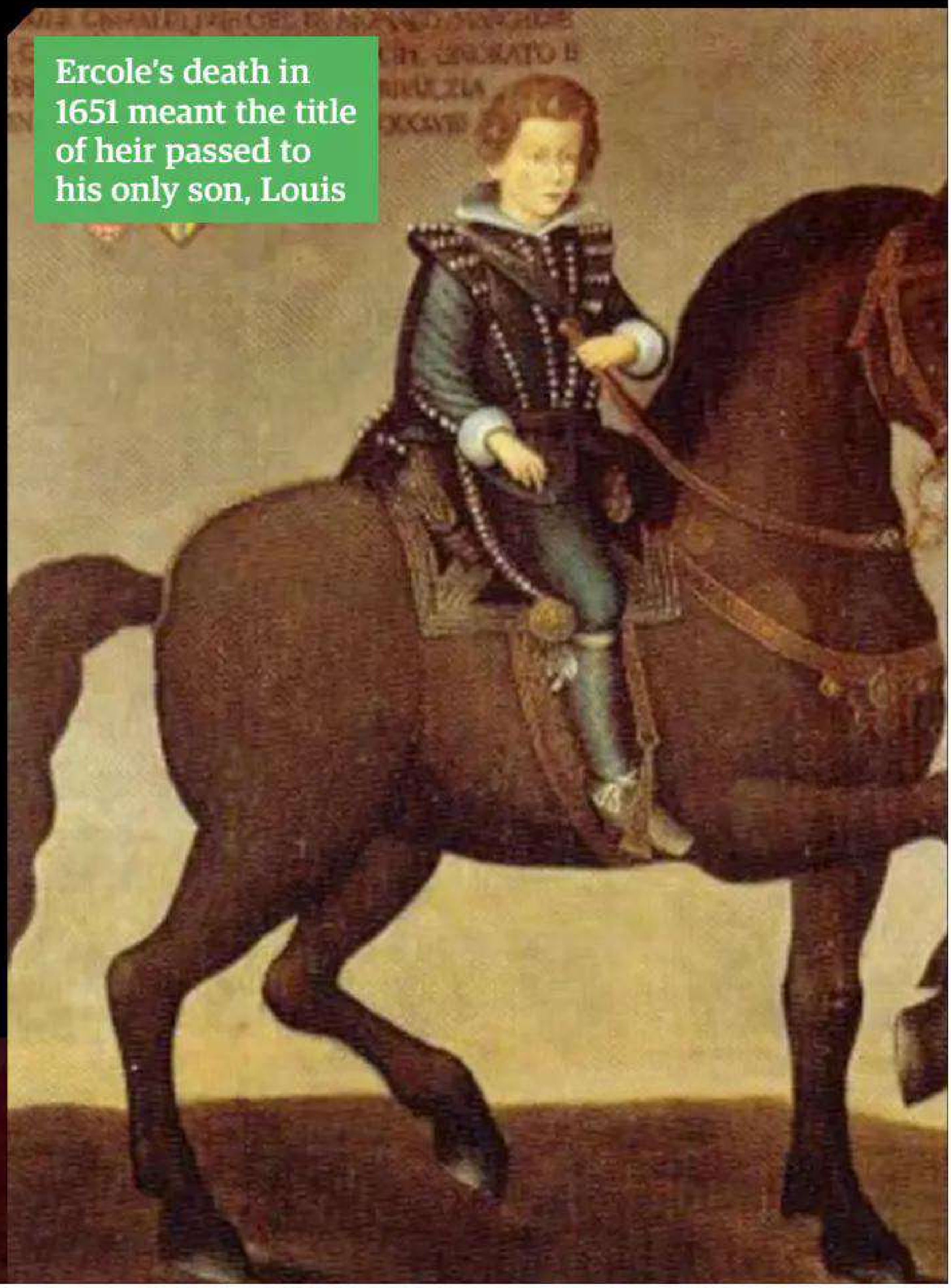
LORD LUCIEN'S MURDEROUS WAYS CAUGHT UP WITH HIM IN THE END, PUTTING HIS WIFE AND CHILD IN DANGER

Having murdered his older brother Jean II, Lucien Grimaldi, son of Claudine and Lambert Grimaldi, assumed the role of Lord of Monaco and ruled for 18 years. During his reign, he married Jeanne de Pontevès-Cabanes with whom he had at least five children, only two of whom

The Short Life of Ercole

AN UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT CUT SHORT THE LIFE OF MONACO'S HEIR

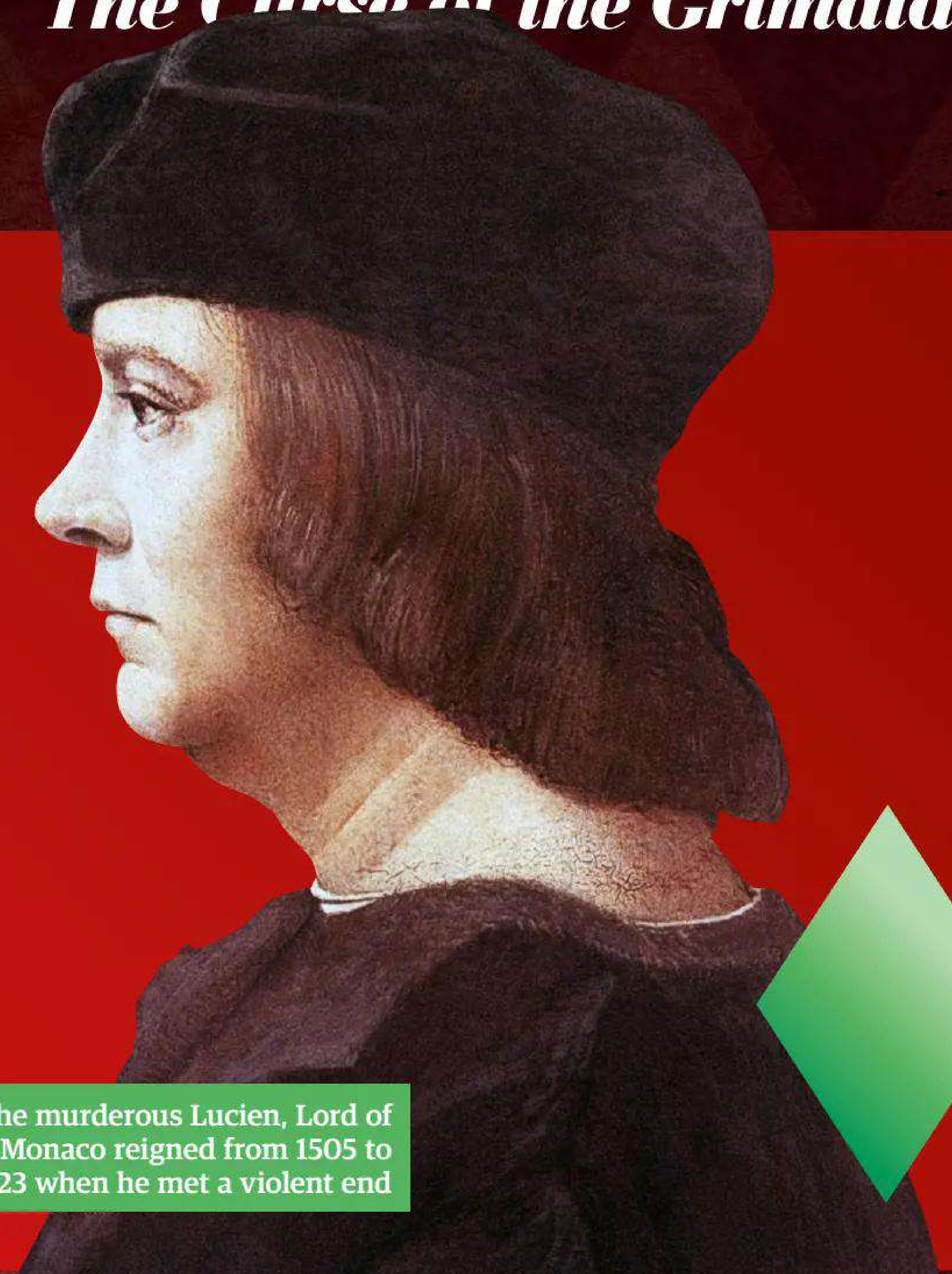
Another royal Grimaldi romance that ended in tragedy was the marriage of Ercole, Marquis of Baux and his wife Aurelia Spinola. Ercole, sometimes also referred to as Hercule, married Aurelia in 1641 when he was just 17 years old. At the time of the marriage, Ercole was the Grimaldi heir as the only son of Prince



Ercole's death in 1651 meant the title of heir passed to his only son, Louis survived to adulthood. Lucien proved to be a capable leader of Monaco, fighting fearlessly to defend the state from the Genoese and skilfully negotiating with the French and the Spanish. Lord Lucien was soon internationally recognised as a powerful man, and it has been suggested that he served as some inspiration to Niccolò Machiavelli when he wrote *The Prince*, with the Italian philosopher having visited Monaco and observed the leadership of Lucien.

In spite of all the success Lucien brought to Monaco as its sovereign lord, he still had his enemies. His rule ended with murder, just as it had begun, when he was killed by his own nephew. Bartolomeo Doria, the Genoese son of Lucien's sister, arranged for his men to ambush Lucien in the Prince's Palace of Monaco on 22 August 1523. In assassinating Lucien, Doria hoped to seize the throne of Monaco, but Lucien's brother Augustin ensured the murderers were captured and the throne was secured. Poor widowed Jeanne, Lucien's wife, and his infant son Honoré were taken hostage by the Genoese assassins who intended to exchange them in return for being allowed to leave Monaco unharmed. Augustin had no choice but to agree to their demands, and Doria and his men left the state.

Lucien's son, the nine-month-old Honoré, inherited the title Lord of Monaco, with Augustin serving as his regent until he was old enough to rule himself. Lucien's wife Jeanne, who had been through a traumatic experience, later remarried.



The murderous Lucien, Lord of Monaco reigned from 1505 to 1523 when he met a violent end

Honoré II and his wife Ippolita Trivulzio. Together, Ercole and Aurelia enjoyed ten years of marriage, during which time they had four healthy children, including a son, and the future of the House of Grimaldi was looking rosy.

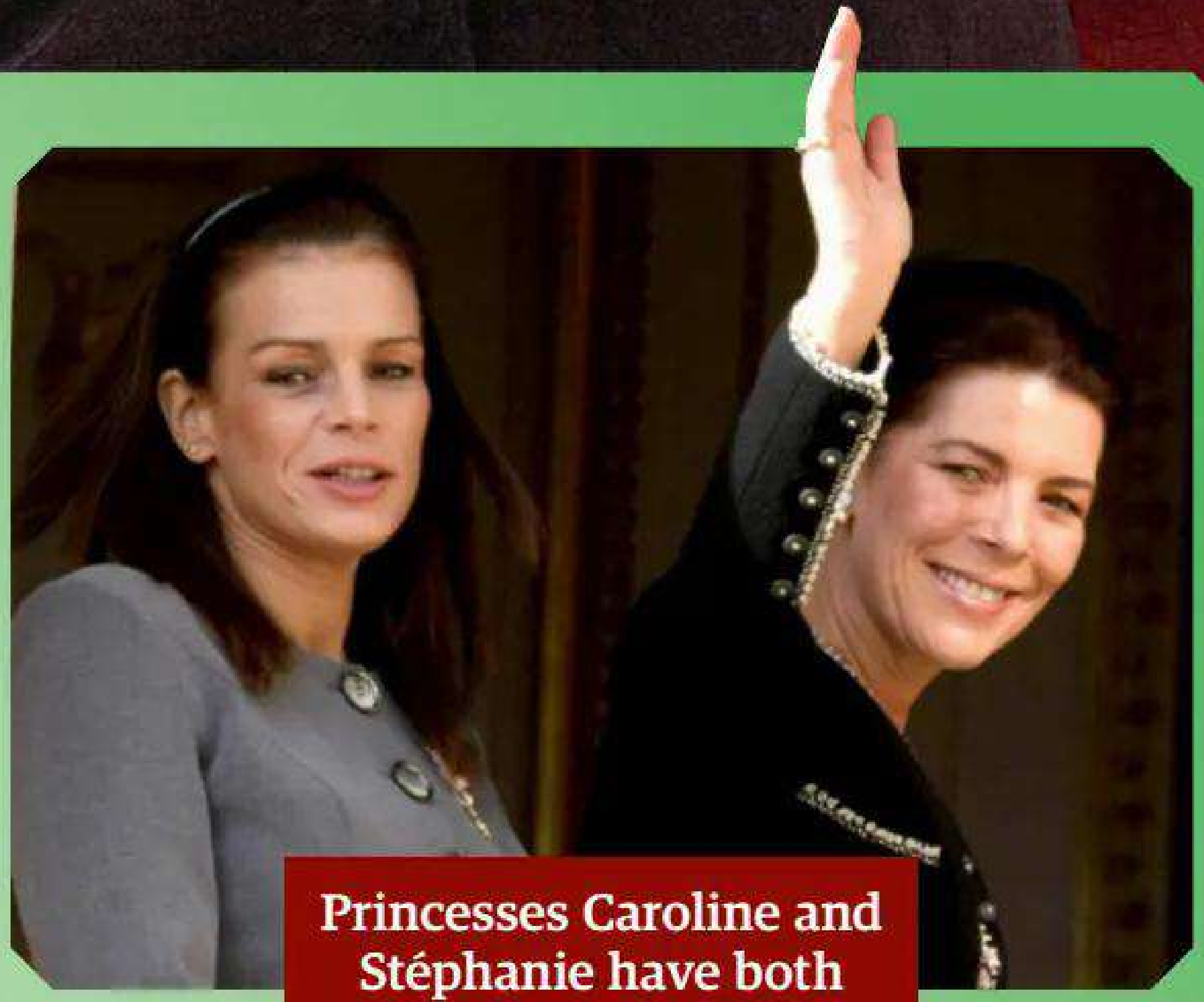
Unfortunately, Ercole's life came to a dramatic end on 1 August 1651. While on a trip with his young family to visit the convent of Carnoles in Menton on the French Riviera, Ercole went for a walk and came across some soldiers shooting at targets. Ercole joined them and asked one of the soldiers to shoot at a target for him, either to see how capable the soldier was or to see him demonstrate the firing of a new type of gun called an arquebuse. Rushing to obey Ercole, the soldier turned quickly and the gun accidentally fired. Three men were wounded by the gunshots, including Ercole who was hit in the spine. The heir of Monaco died the following day aged just 27. The young family was torn apart and the Grimaldi family were devastated at the loss. The soldier who had caused the accident was put in prison for a period before being released, but not before he had allegedly tried to kill himself. In Ercole's dying hours, he insisted that the young soldier was not to blame and should not be punished. Ercole's son, Louis, became the Grimaldi heir and went on to rule after the death of Honoré II in 1662. Aurelia never remarried and lived a difficult life at the mercy of Ercole's father, whose ever-changing attitude towards her saw her never truly settled.

The Ruling Grimaldis

ARE THE CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE GRIMALDI FAMILY AFFLICTED BY THE CURSE?

It seems as though the curse on the House of Grimaldi continues to plague the royal family to this day. Prince Albert II, the current ruler of Monaco and son of Prince Rainier III and Grace Kelly, and his wife Princess Charlene were reported in 2023 to be supposedly living in separate countries, him in Monaco and her in Switzerland, despite being the parents of two young children. Upon the couple's marriage in 2011, there was widespread reporting on the appearance that the bride looked upset on her wedding day, with several photographs of a teary-eyed Charlene circulating. However, these reports were dismissed, with the new Princess insisting it was usual for a bride to be emotional on her wedding day.

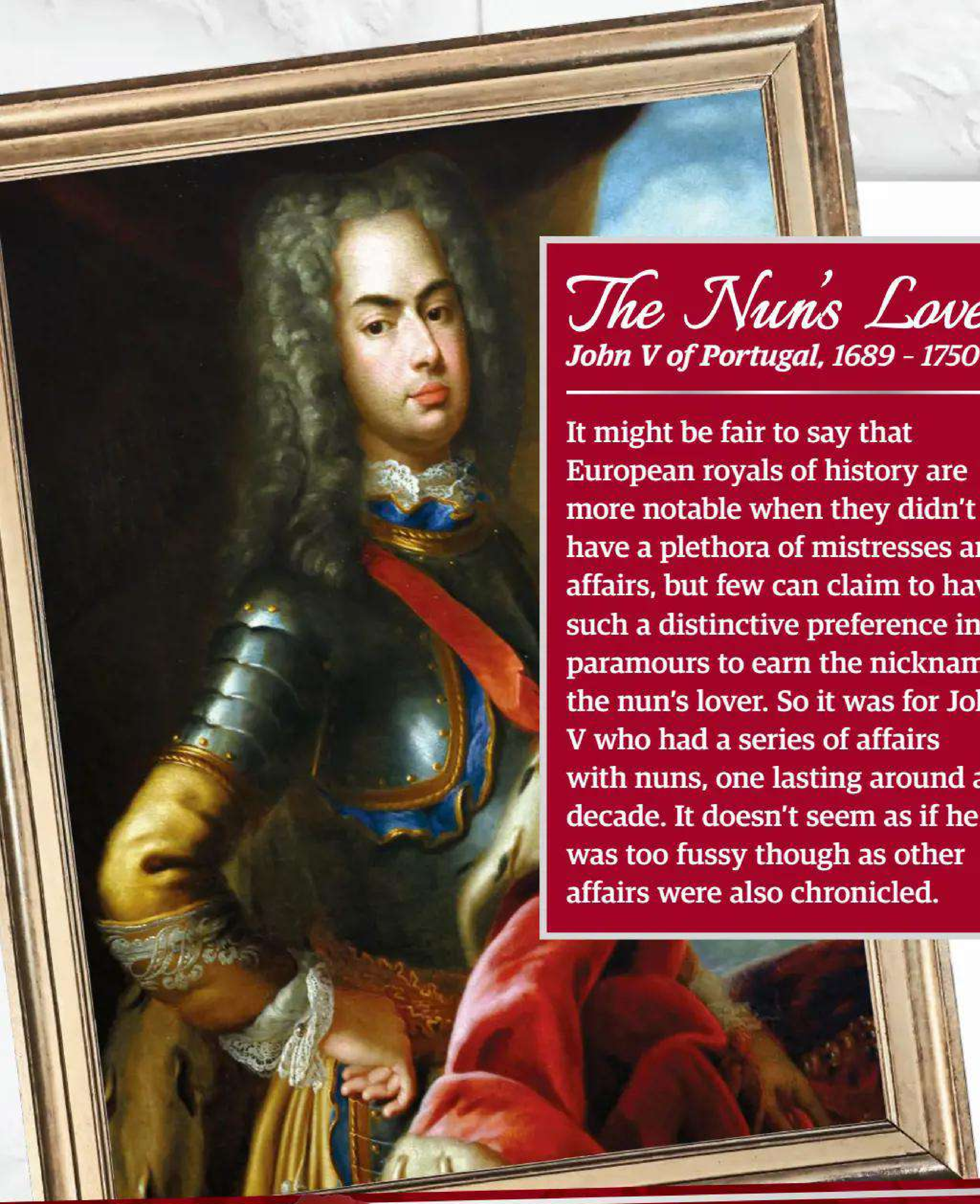
Prince Albert married South African swimmer Charlene Wittstock in July 2011



Princesses Caroline and Stéphanie have both been unlucky in love

Albert's two sisters have struggled to find lasting love, with both Caroline and Stéphanie having been married multiple times. Caroline's first marriage ended in divorce after just two years and she has been estranged from her third husband since 2009. Her second marriage ended in tragedy when her husband, Stefano Casiraghi, died in a speedboat accident in 1990. Stéphanie, on the other hand, caused a scandal when she fell pregnant by her bodyguard in 1992. The couple went on to have a second child before they married in 1995, but the marriage only lasted a year before they divorced. Stéphanie later gave birth to a third child while she was unmarried, before she made headlines once again when she ran away with the circus - yes, she actually did that. In 2001, the Princess' relationship with a married elephant trainer saw her take her three children to live in his caravan until that relationship deteriorated. Her last marriage was to another circus performer, this time an acrobat called Adans Lopez Perez, in 2003, which also ended in divorce after only a year.

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images



The Nun's Lover

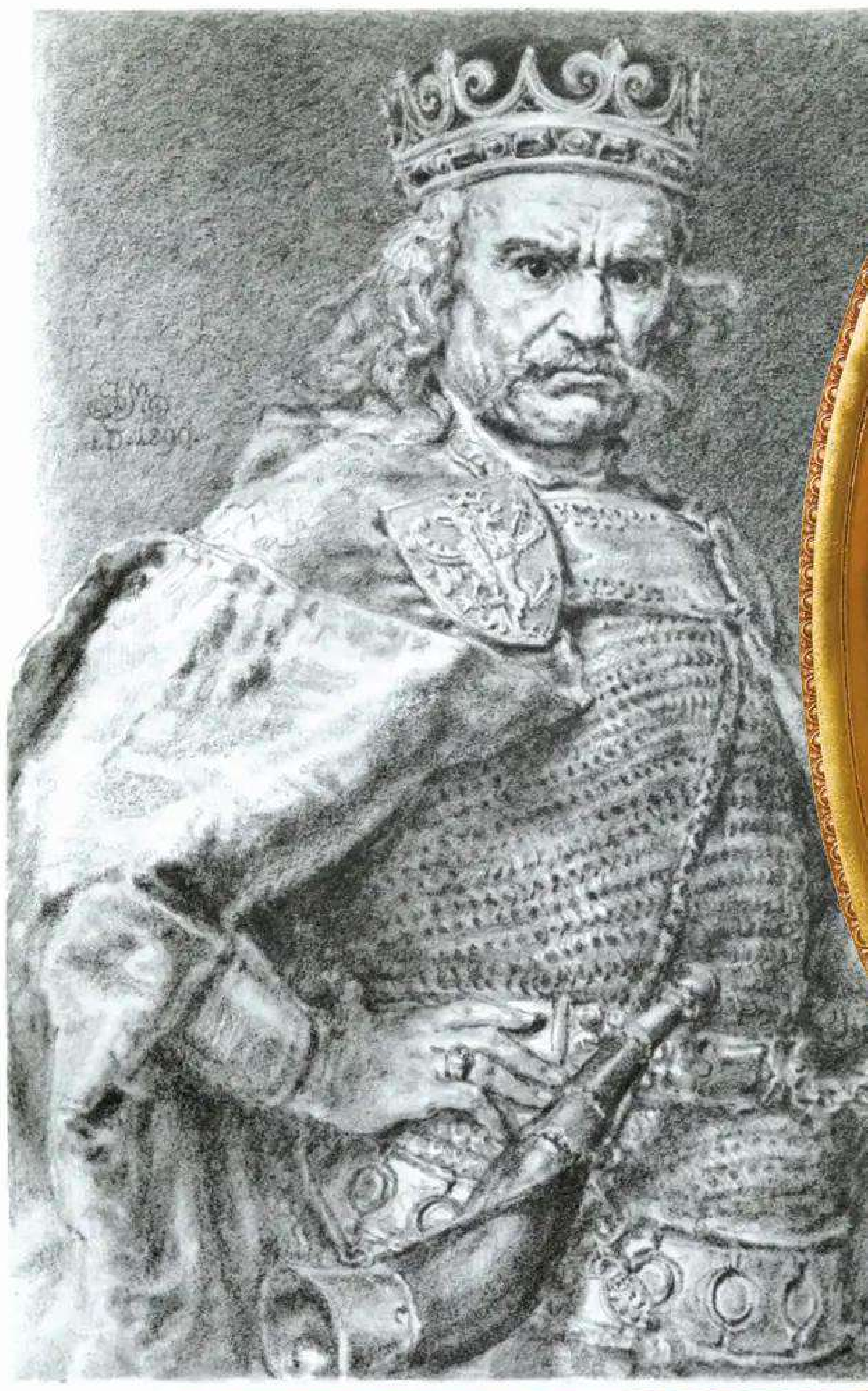
John V of Portugal, 1689 – 1750

It might be fair to say that European royals of history are more notable when they didn't have a plethora of mistresses and affairs, but few can claim to have such a distinctive preference in paramours to earn the nickname the nun's lover. So it was for John V who had a series of affairs with nuns, one lasting around a decade. It doesn't seem as if he was too fussy though as other affairs were also chronicled.

The Elbow-High

Władysław I Łokietek, King Of Poland, c.1260 – 1333

It should be fairly obvious where Władysław I, a celebrated king who managed to consolidate provinces into the single Polish nation, got his name from… he was short. Or we thought he was. Recent research has put his height at 152-155cm (5'0"-5'1"). Legend had claimed that he was a diminutive 120cm (3'11"). As it happens, the average male height would have been about 165-167cm (5'5"-5'6") at the time. Instead some experts believe it was intended as an insulting name when he was a lowly prince of limited influence.



What's in a name?

The Bad Entertainer

Halfdan Olafsson, King of Uppsala, Unknown – c.784

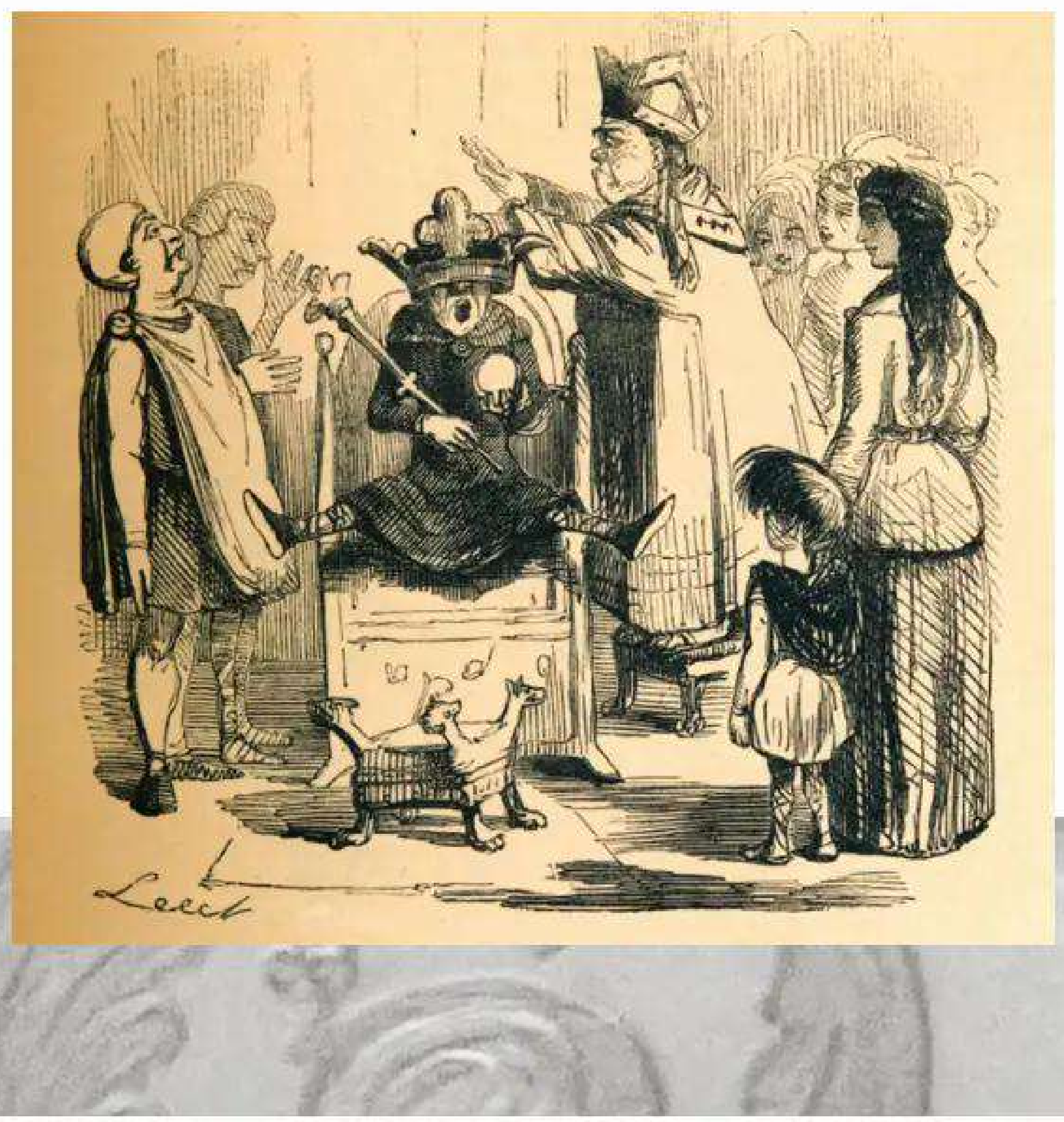
As much as we would like to tell you that Halfdan got his name because he tried his hand at stand-up comedy, the explanation for his epithet is much simpler. While known as a generous king in terms of pay for his men, he didn't provide them with enough food. So, he didn't entertain them well. Still, Halfdan fared much better when it came to a nickname than his father, known as Eystein Fart. Alas, the reason for that appears lost to time.

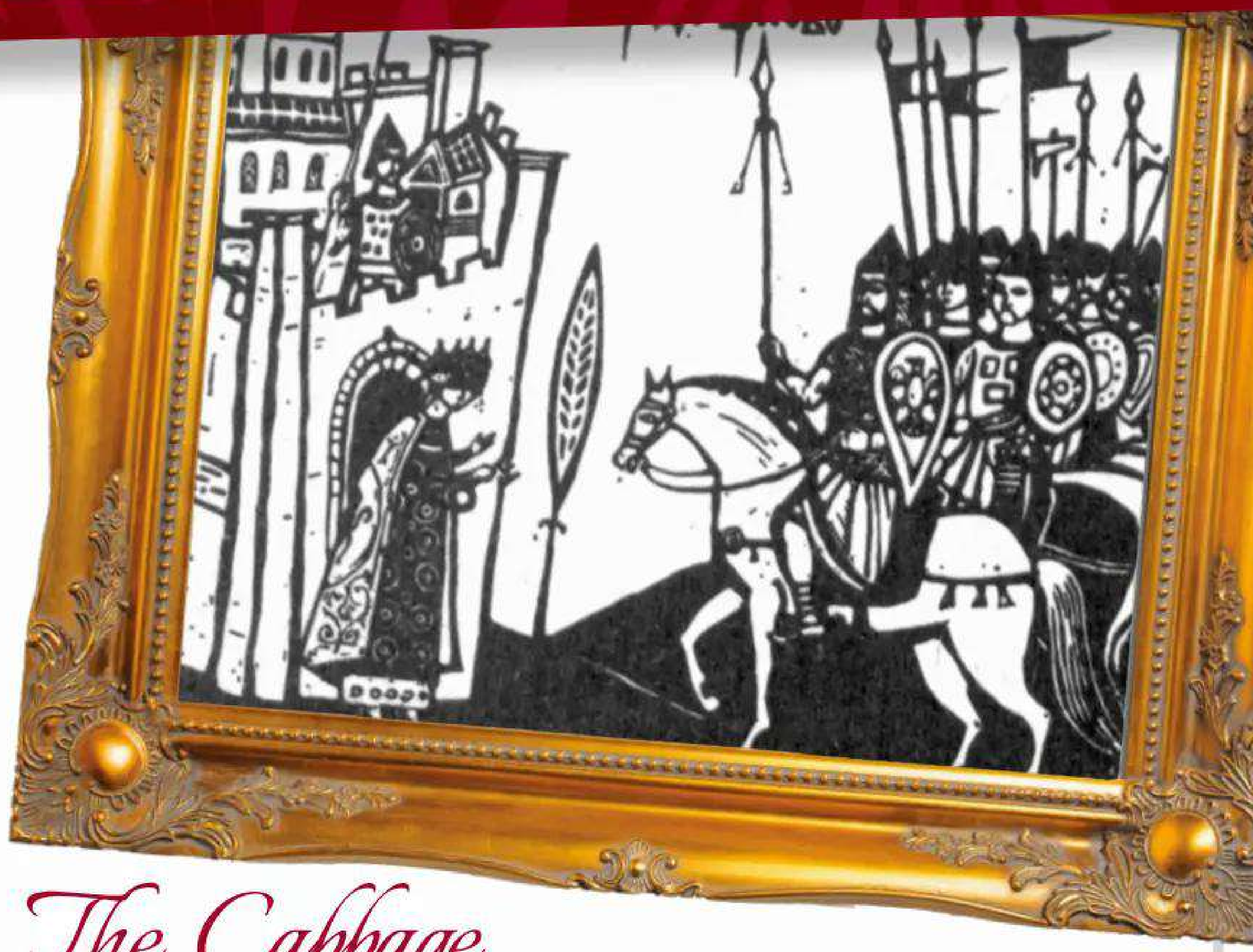
Image source: wiki/Snorre Sturlason

The Unready

Æthelred II of England, c.968 – 1016

Some names are just a little easier to mock than others and it turns out that royals courts are often very similar to children's playgrounds when it comes to cruel wordplay. So, when your name means 'noble counsel' and your reign is dogged by invasions and failures, you end up being called 'Unraed' meaning bad counsel or 'unready'. So it came to be that we got one of England's most famous royal nicknames.

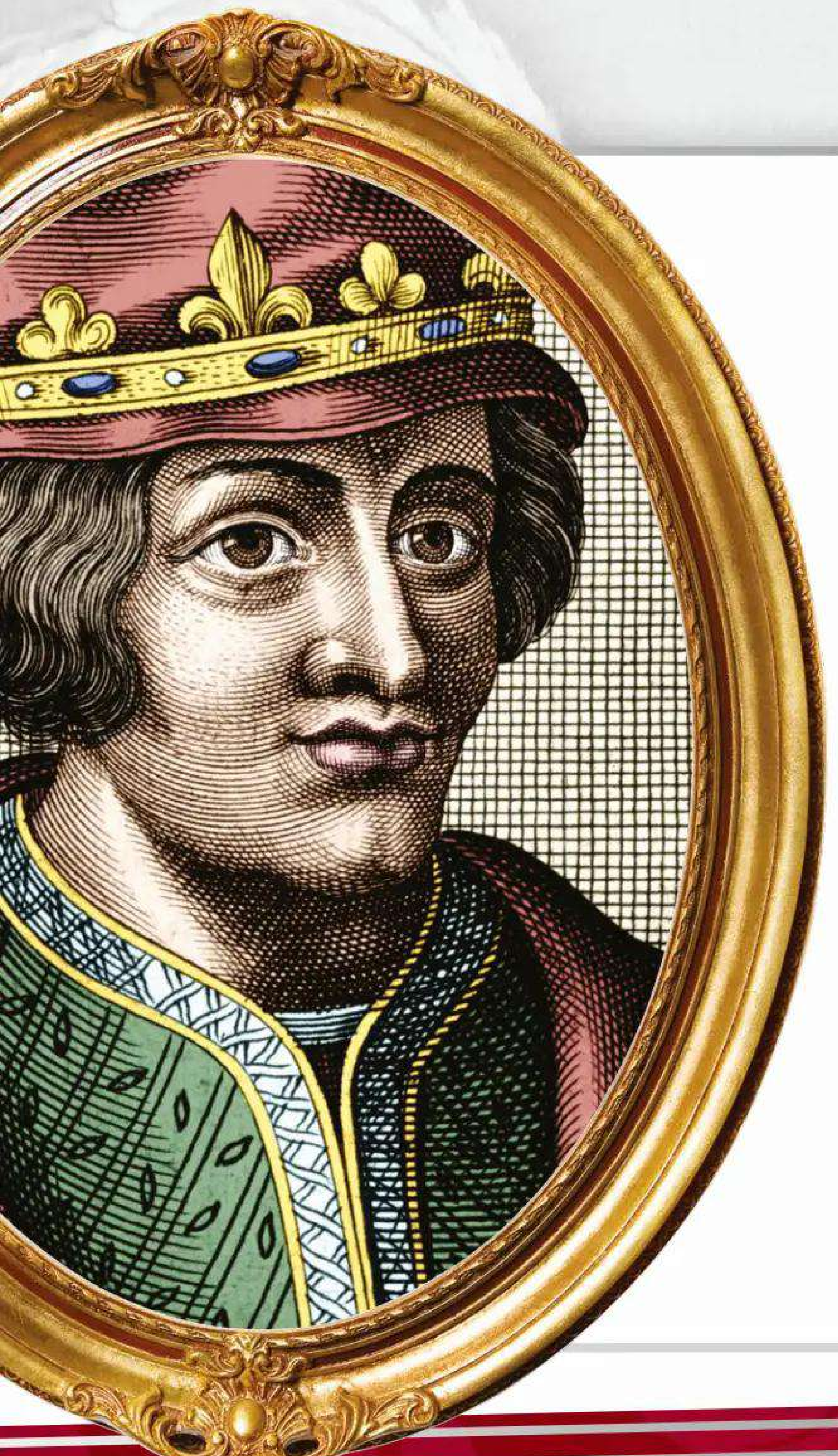




The Cabbage

Ivaylo Of Bulgaria, Unknown – 1281

Rising up as a rebel leader of peasant origins in Bulgaria, Ivaylo's story has taken on near-legendary status, achieving military victories against the mighty Byzantines and Mongols from 1277. His success saw him proclaimed emperor from 1278 to 1279. Due to his lowly origins, he earned the name 'Lakhanas', meaning cabbage. He was ultimately pushed out by nobles and beheaded in 1281.



The Do-Nothing

Louis V, c.966 – 987

Crowned while his father was still alive in 979 and dying only a year after his father died in 987, Louis Do-Nothing earned his moniker with a reign marked by failure on most fronts. His main objective had been to retake the southwest region of France known as Aquitaine, which he couldn't achieve, his wife ran away without an heir, and then he died aged 20 in a hunting accident, ending the Carolingian dynasty.

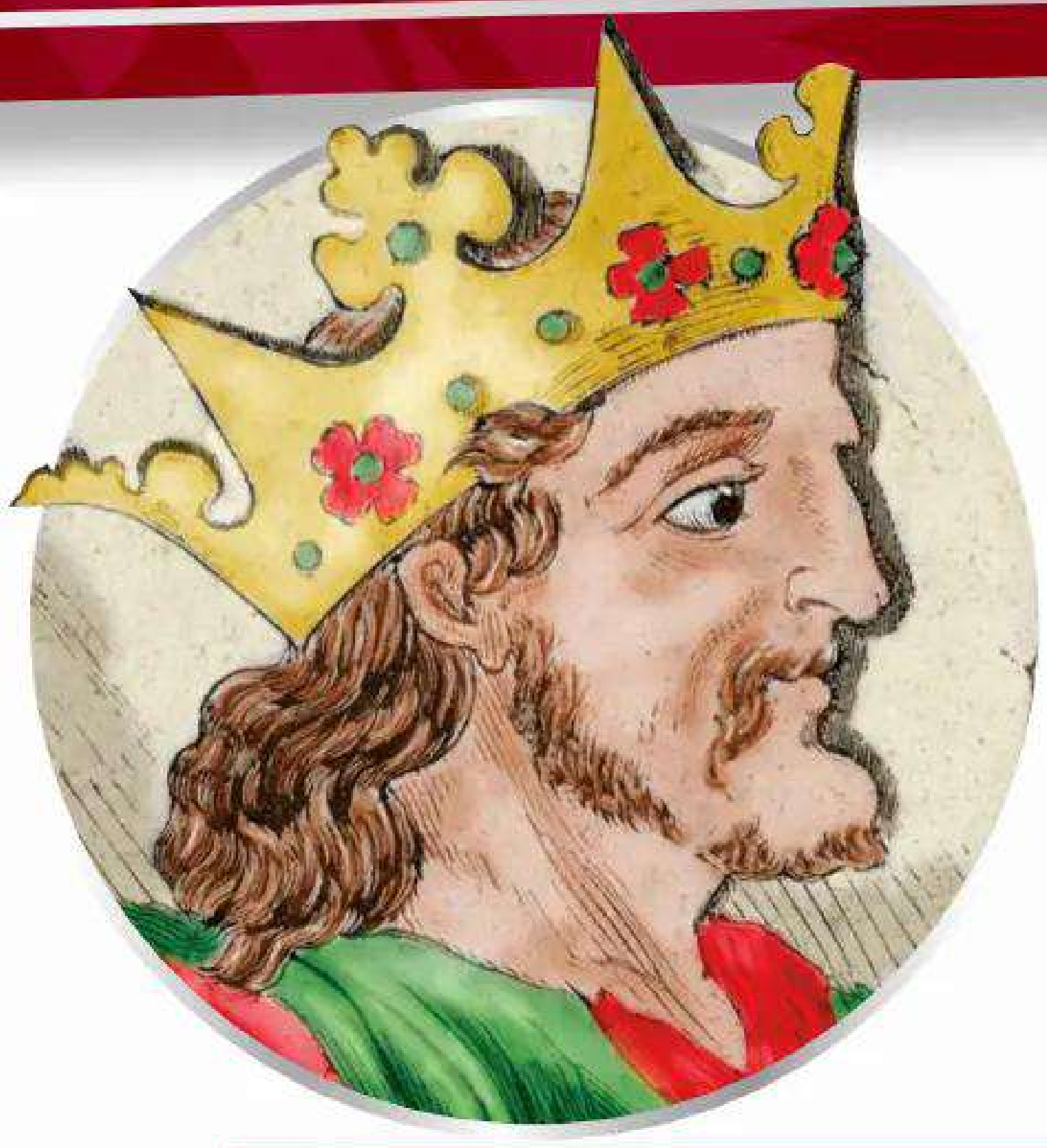
The Slobberer

Alfonso IX, King Of Leon and Galicia, 1171 – 1230

As unfortunate nicknames go, this one stuck hard to a monarch who, for the most part, seems to have worked hard to reform and evolve his kingdom. He opened a university, convened a parliament for greater representation and incurred the wrath of the Vatican by teaming up with the Muslim Almohads to expand his lands in conflict with Castile. But he also had a temper and was known to launch into mouth-frothing tirades. Hence, he became Alfonso 'Baboso', meaning the Slobberer.

20 strangest royal nicknames from history (and where they came from)

William the Conqueror. Suleiman the Magnificent. Ivan the Terrible. Some royal nicknames are pretty memorable and tell you a lot about the person who earned them. Whether given to them in their lifetime or posthumously, you immediately get a picture of how they were thought of and remembered. However, not everyone is so lucky to get such clear and powerful epithets or sobriquets. Here we chronicle some of the most peculiar and surprising royal nicknames and explain how they came to be.



The Gouty

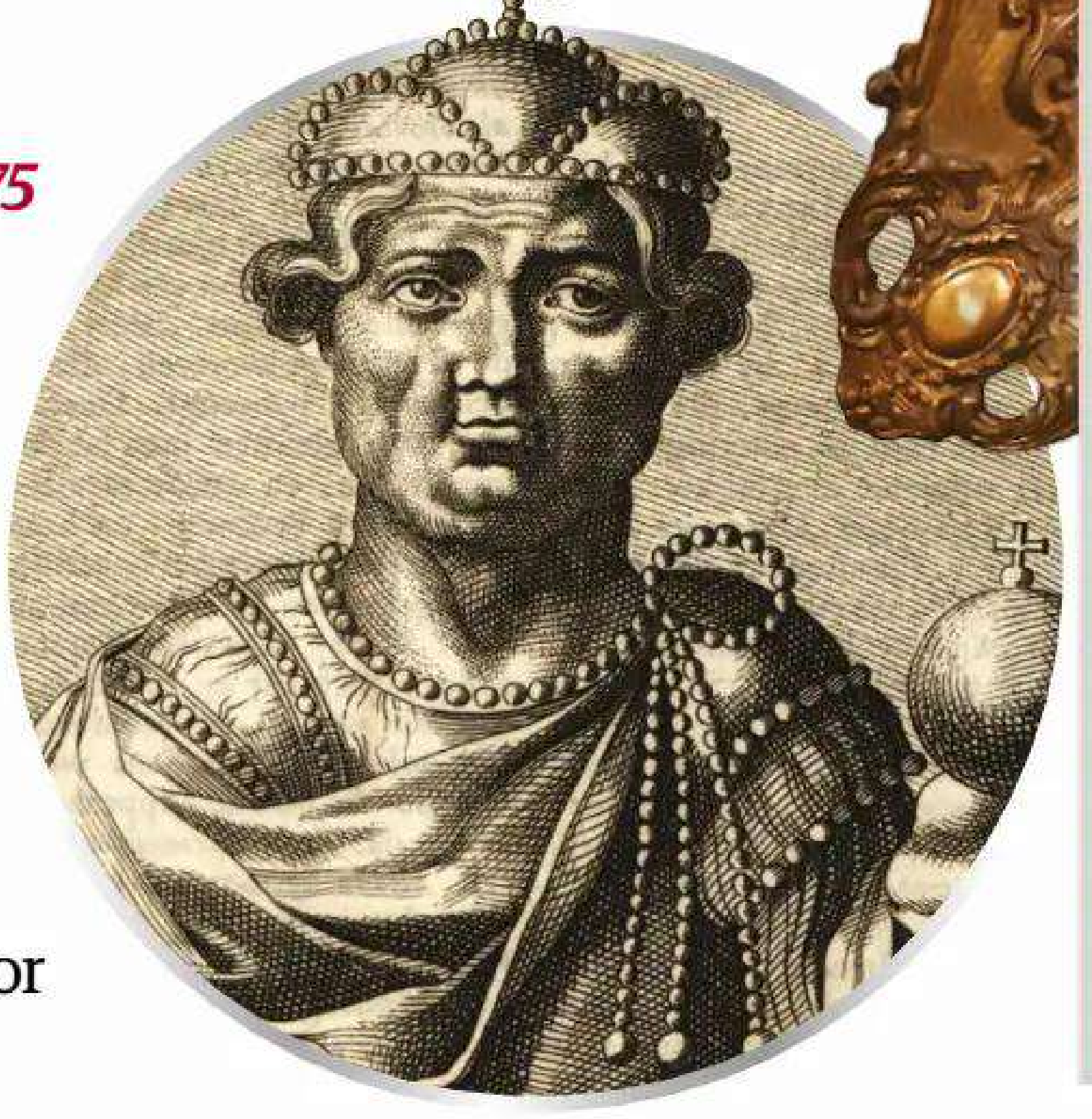
Bermudo II, King Of León, c.953 – 999

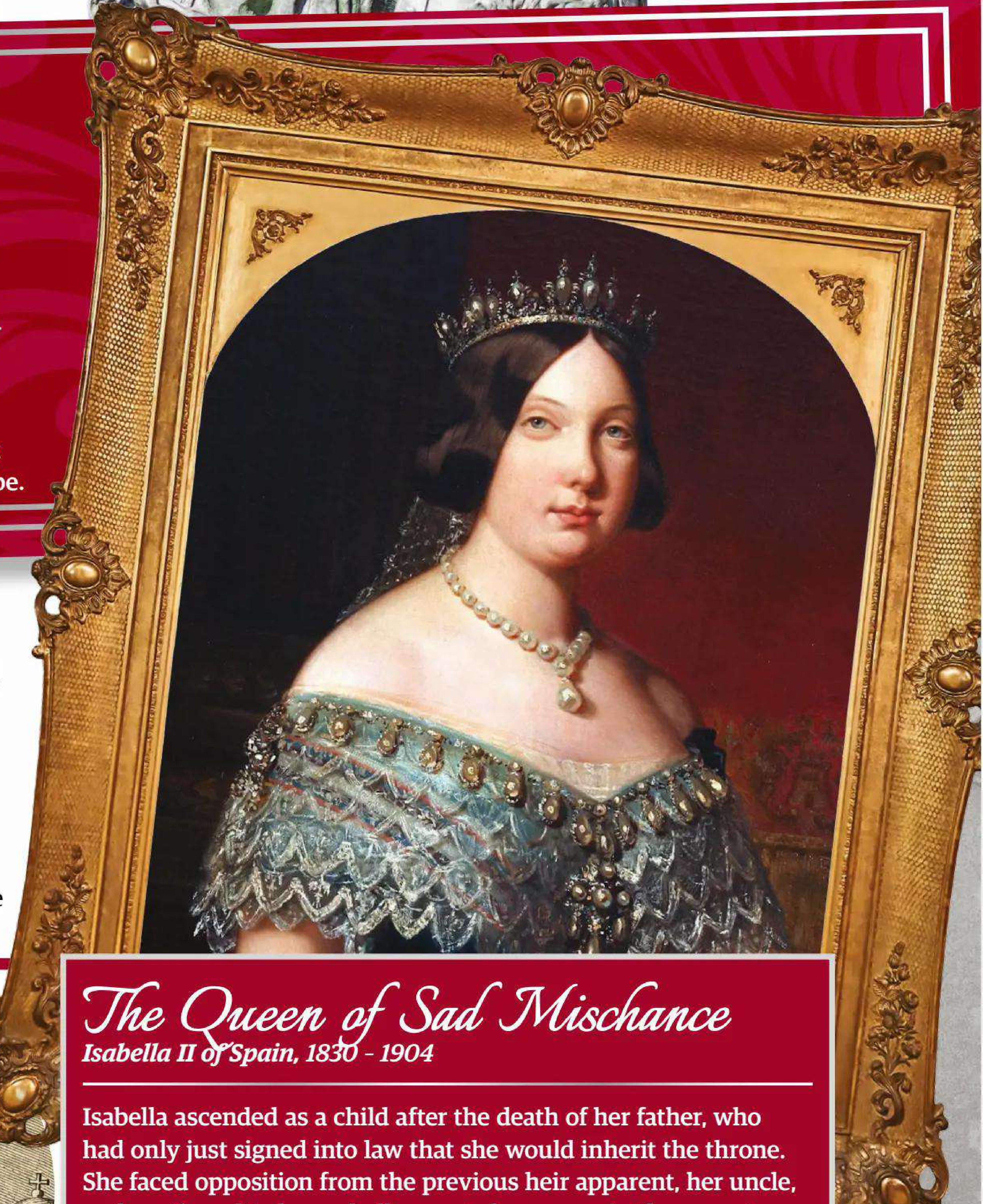
Supported by the nobles of Galicia and Portugal, Bermudo challenged and overthrew Ramiro III in Galicia in 982, going on to become king of León also in 984. However, as his nickname of *el Gotoso* suggests, he suffered in later life from gout. He appears to have been a controversial figure in the years that followed his reign, not least as he relied on the support of the Caliphate of Córdoba for protection in the region.

The Dung-Named

Constantine V, Byzantine Emperor, 718 – 775

The legacy of Constantine V's reign was tarnished after he backed a movement against iconophiles, during which many churches saw their religious icons and relics – many quite valuable – seized or destroyed. There followed a rumour that during his baptism, the infant Constantine had defecated into the baptismal font. Thus, the emperor began to be called *Kopronymos* or 'named in dung'.





The Queen of Sad Mischance

Isabella II of Spain, 1830 – 1904

Isabella ascended as a child after the death of her father, who had only just signed into law that she would inherit the throne. She faced opposition from the previous heir apparent, her uncle, and continued to have challenges to her power in the years to come, including the government who pushed her into a marriage, signing laws and more. Initially popular with the people, her spending and chaotic governance saw them turn on her and she had to flee to France. A life of sad mischance, indeed. ▶

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The Be-shitten

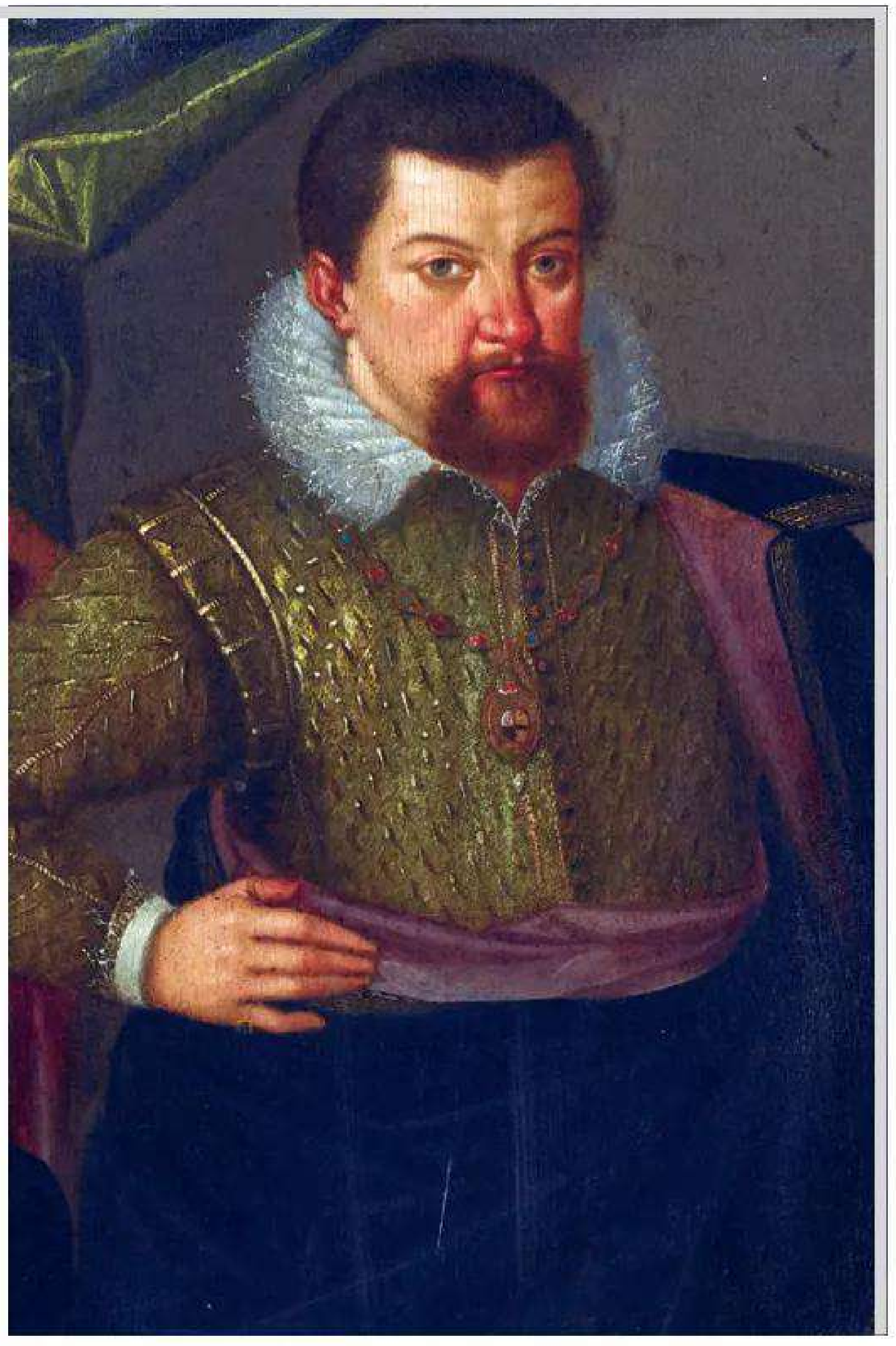
James II of England, 1633 – 1701

Don't get on the wrong side of Ireland. Advice that many English royals could have heeded over the centuries, but James II was one of many to make the error. He assembled an Irish and French force to take on William of Orange for the throne at the Battle of the Boyne, but lost, leaving Ireland for France. Seen in Ireland to have failed in his duty, he earned the nickname *Séamas an Chaca* or James the be-shitten, if you prefer.

The Beer Jug

John George I, Elector of Saxony, 1585 – 1656

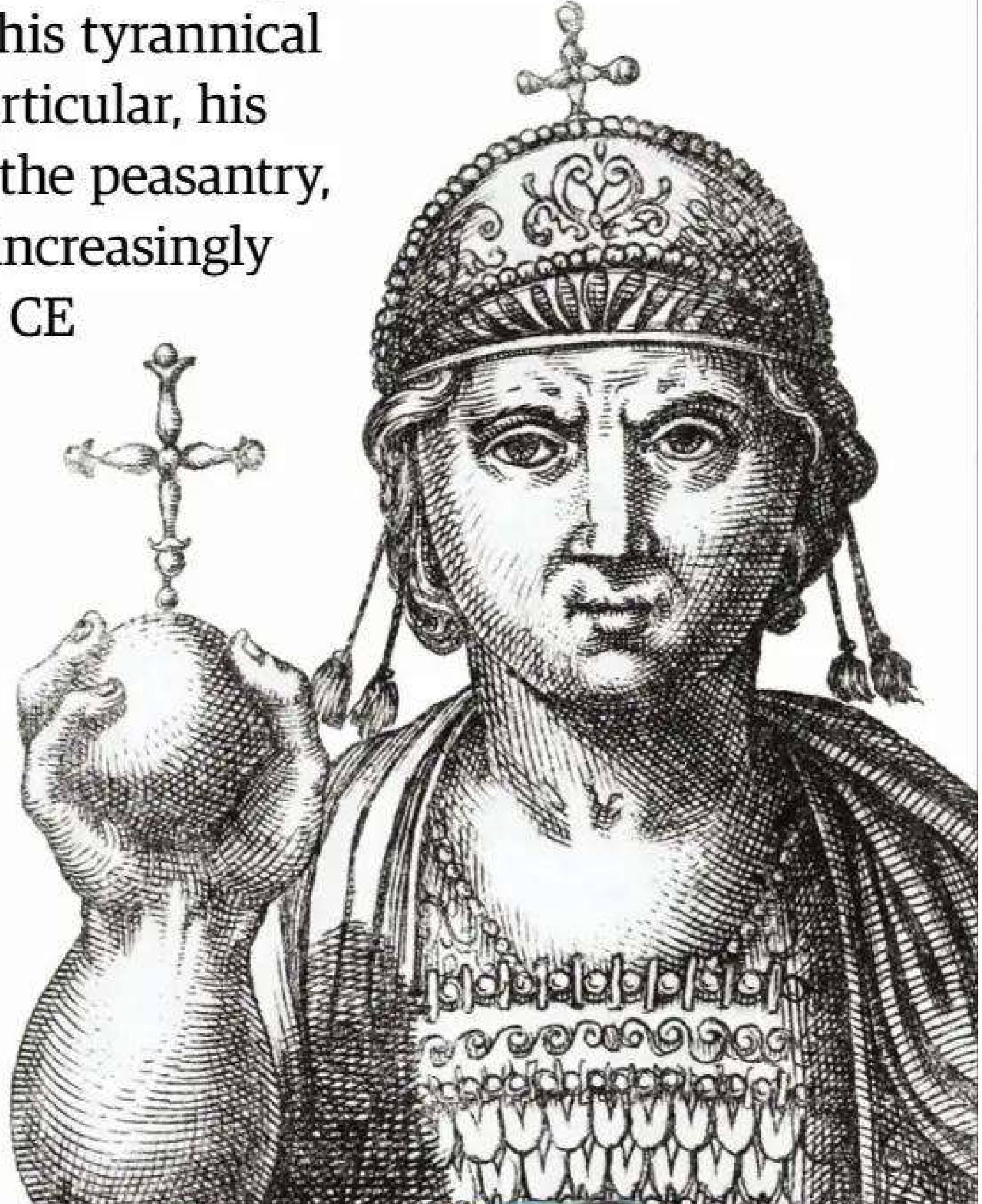
A ruler who would much rather be drinking or hunting than dealing with the complex inter-state politics of the era, John George I still found himself dragged into the arguments that resulted in the Thirty Years' War. He flipped sides a couple of times, but ultimately seems to have weakened Saxony's standing in Germany. He just wanted to "drink his beer in peace" so his various names of 'Beer Jug' and 'Drunkard' are easy to understand.

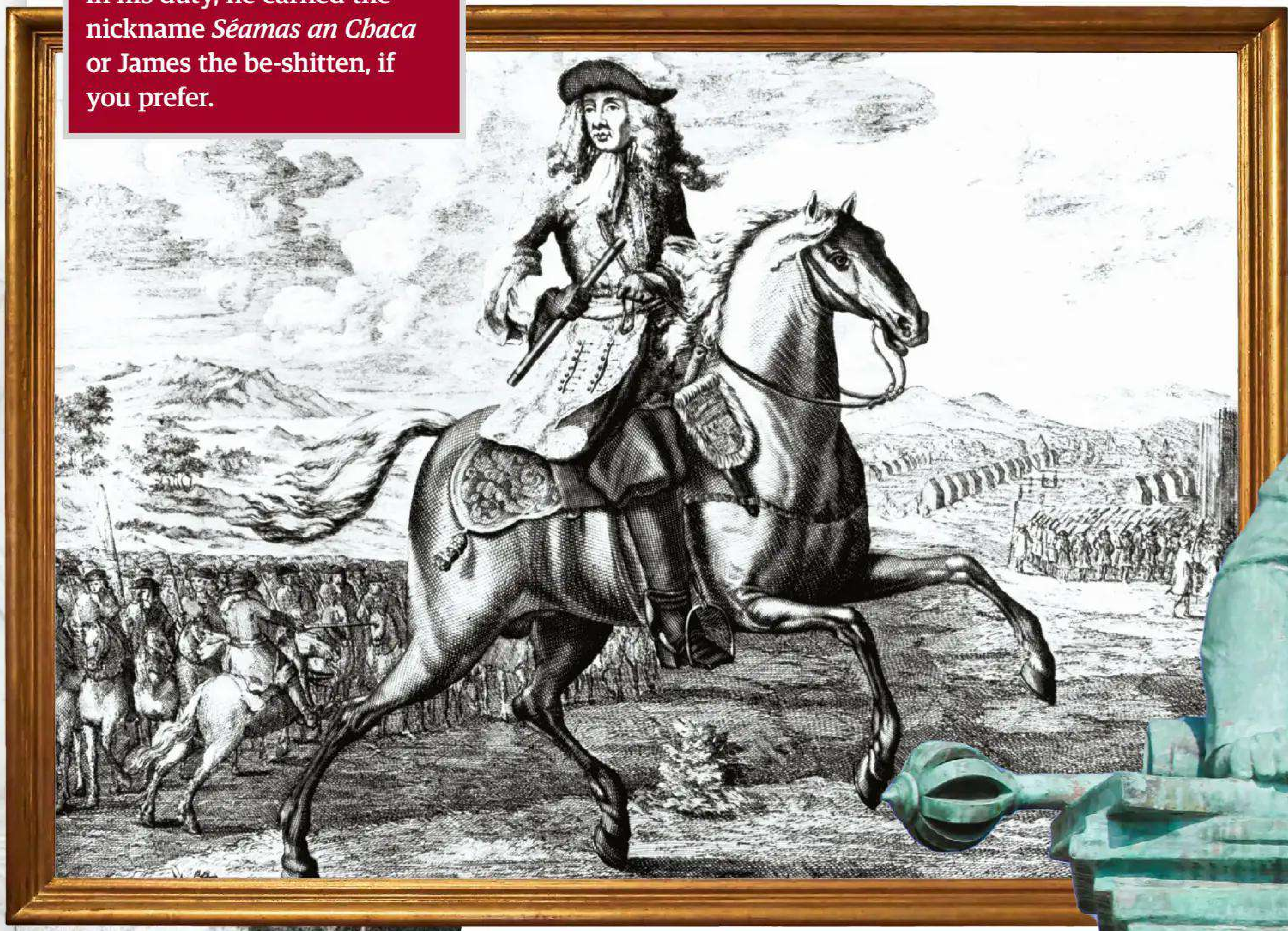


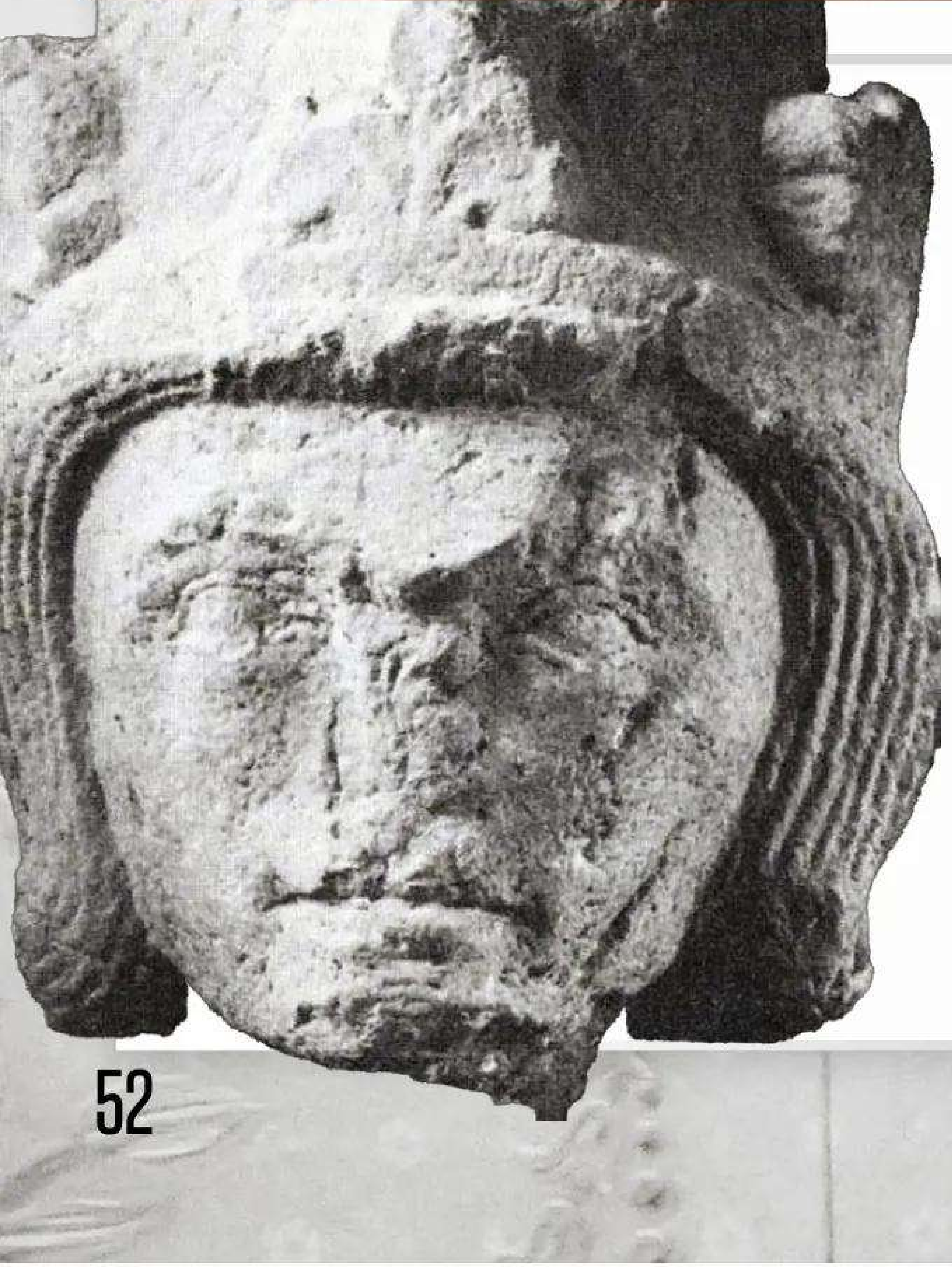
The Slit-Nosed

Justinian II, Byzantine Emperor, c.669 – 711

While Justinian II had some successes in reclaiming lost lands of the Byzantine Empire early in his reign, his tyrannical policies and, in particular, his heavy taxation of the peasantry, saw him become increasingly unpopular. In 695 CE an uprising led by Leontios, a senior general in the army, saw Justinian overthrown and exiled. To add injury to insult, Justinian's nose was cut off, earning him his nickname for posterity.



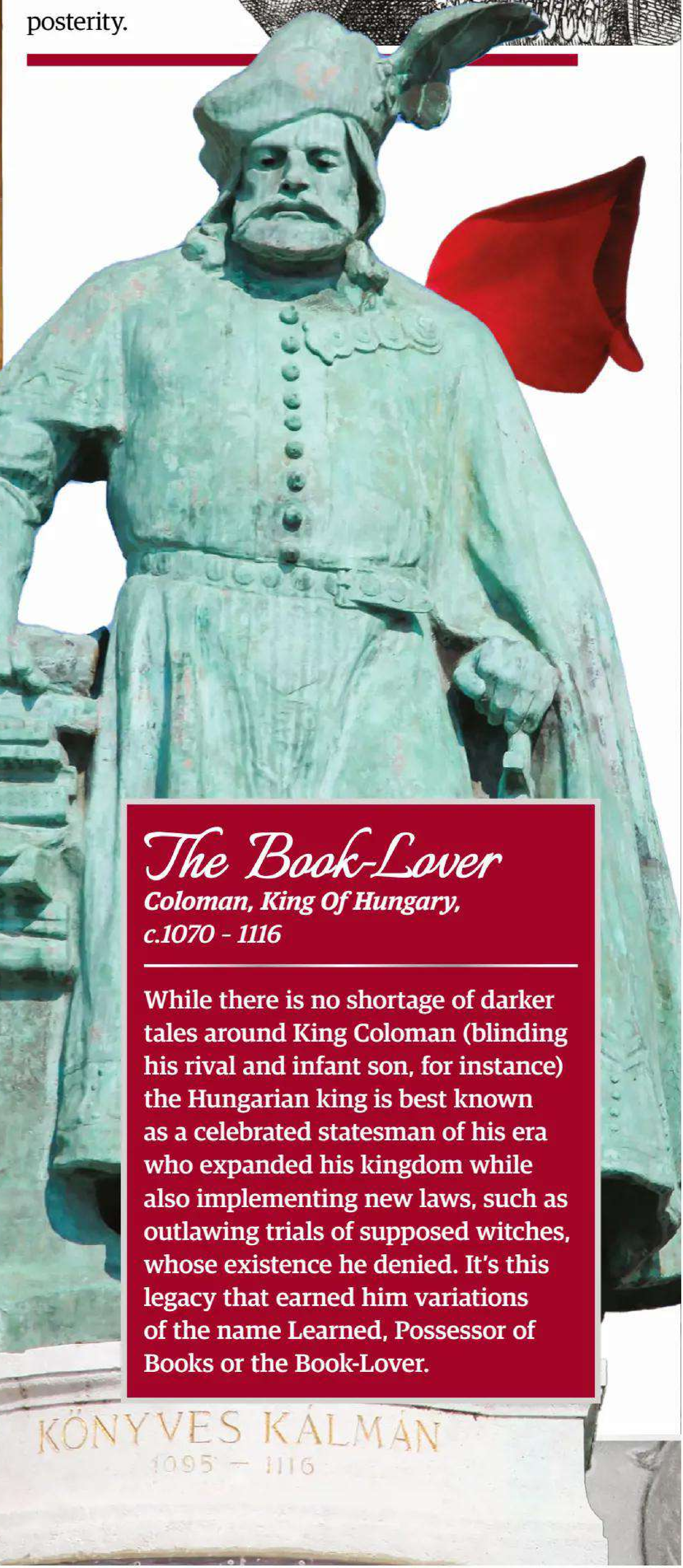




The Lisp and Lame

Eric XI of Sweden, 1216 – 1250

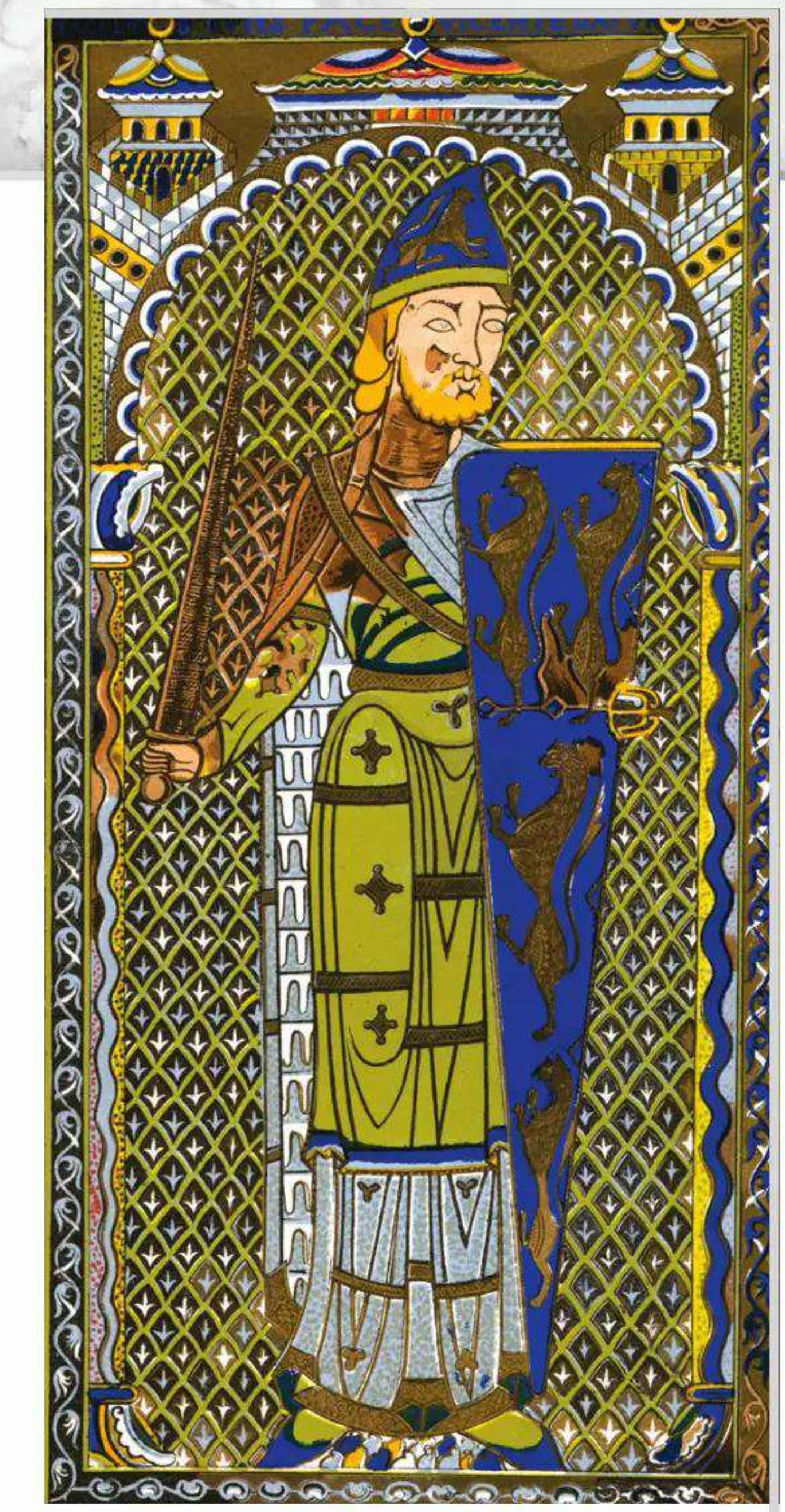
Don't let anyone ever tell you that a poem can't do you any harm. Thanks to the *Eric Chronicle*, the 14th century medieval rhyming history of Swedish kings, we came to know Eric XI as limping in his walk and lisping in his talk. So it came to be that while he was simply Erik Eriksson in his own time, a king who inherited the throne as a child only to flee in the face of a rival and then return with little authority, became known to posterity as Eric the Lisp and Lame.



The Book-Lover

Coloman, King Of Hungary, c.1070 – 1116

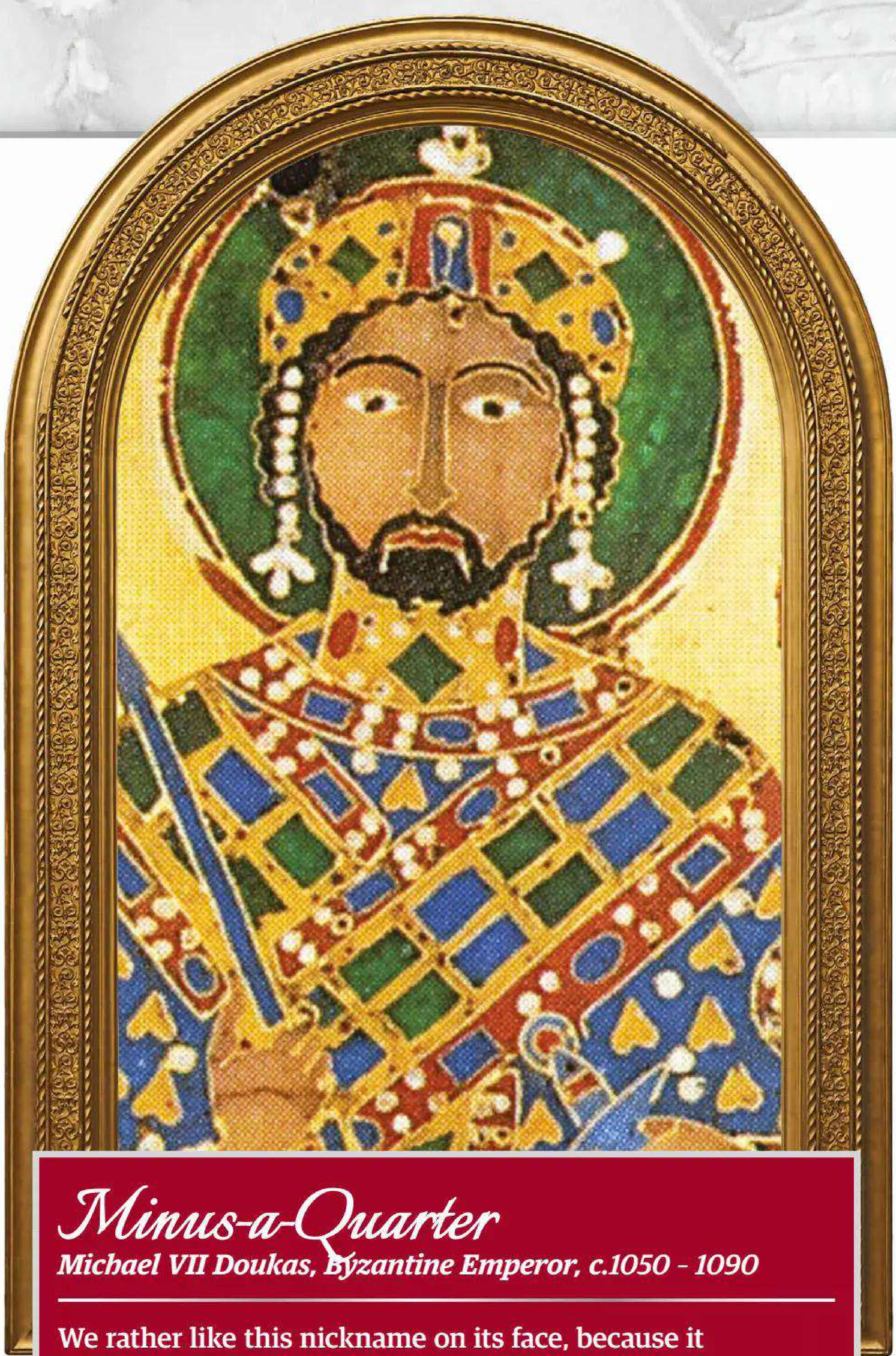
While there is no shortage of darker tales around King Coloman (blinding his rival and infant son, for instance) the Hungarian king is best known as a celebrated statesman of his era who expanded his kingdom while also implementing new laws, such as outlawing trials of supposed witches, whose existence he denied. It's this legacy that earned him variations of the name Learned, Possessor of Books or the Book-Lover.



Broom-plant

Geoffrey V, Count of Anjou, 1113 – 1151

Some names hide loftier tales, and being known as Geoffrey Broom-plant probably doesn't seem like a prestigious beginning for anything. Geoffrey got the name through his association with the *planta genista*, the Latin name of the yellow bloom flower associated with his home of Anjou that he either wore in his helmet or grew in abundance on his hunting grounds. Either way, the nickname gave us the name Plantagenet, as Geoffrey's son Henry II began a new royal dynasty in England.



Minus-a-Quarter

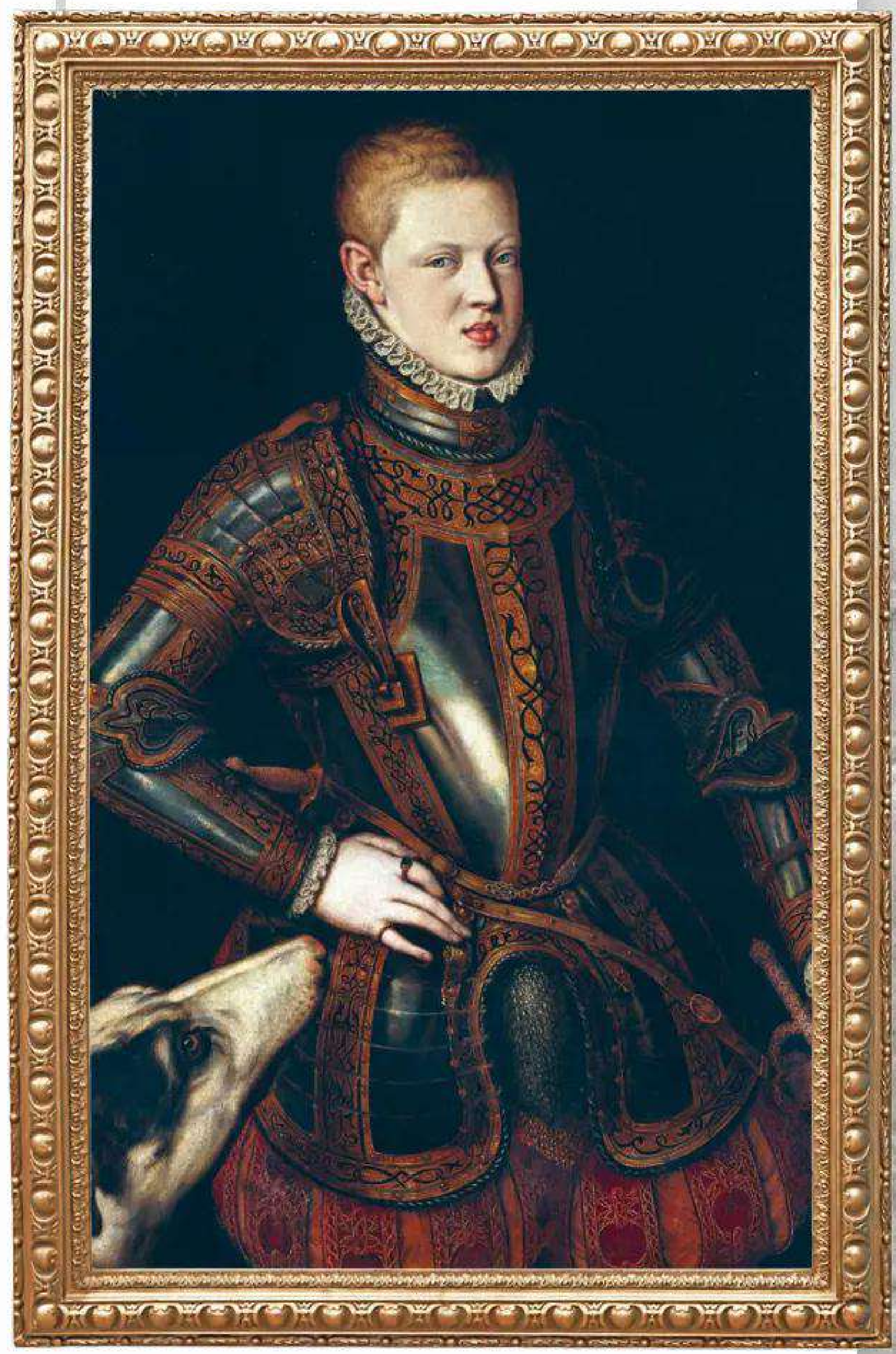
Michael VII Doukas, Byzantine Emperor, c.1050 – 1090

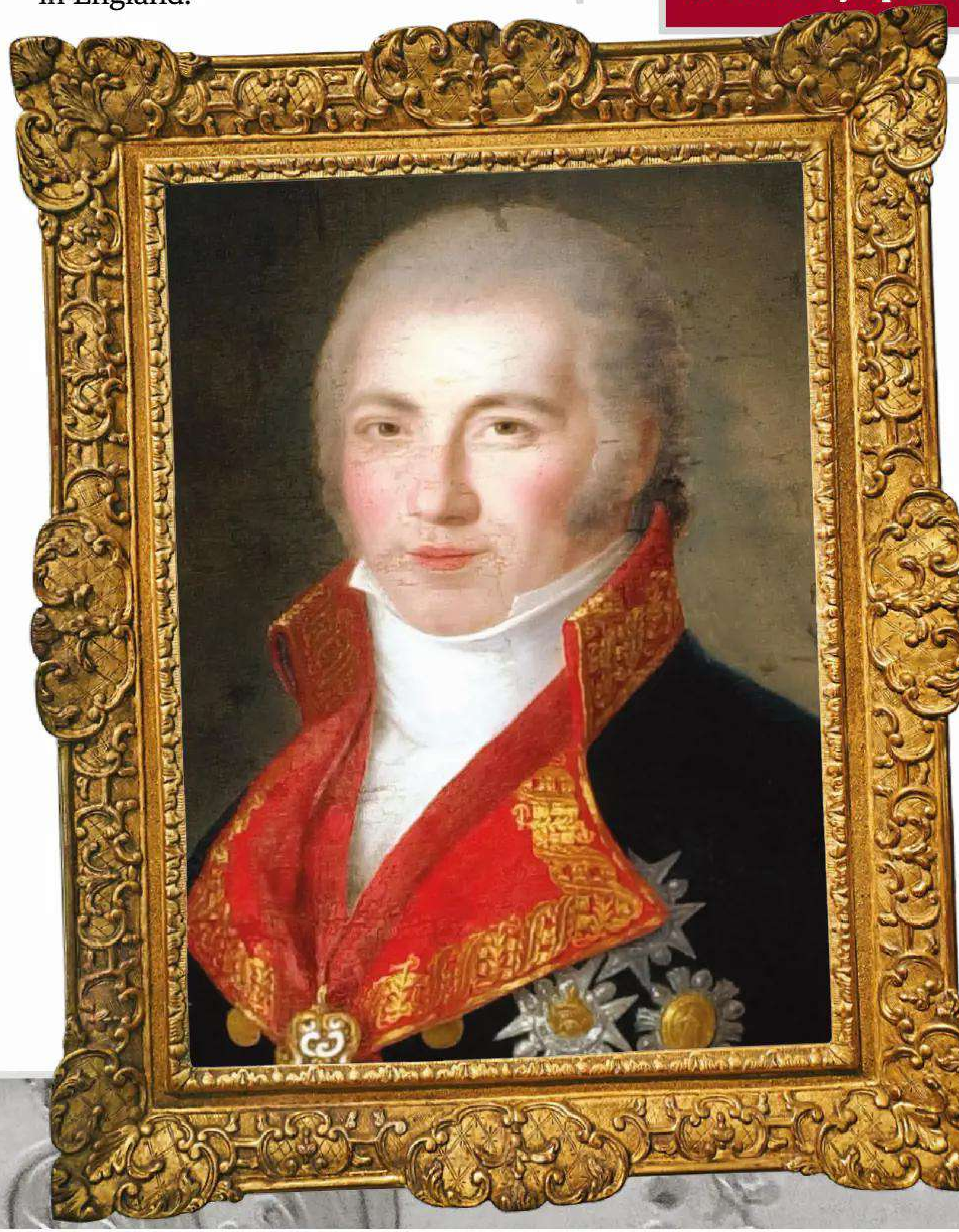
We rather like this nickname on its face, because it feels a little like those euphemisms for people who are perceived to be easily distracted or unintelligent (they're a sandwich short of a picnic, for example). However the name Parapinakes that Michael VII earned is a much duller affair. His reign oversaw an attempt to nationalise grain sales, leading to wheat prices increasing and buyers getting a quarter less wheat for their money. He abdicated in the face of a military uprising against his rule shortly after.

The Asleep

Sebastian of Portugal, 1554 – 1578

The name for this monarch derives from messianic tales that formed after his death. A deeply religious king, raised by Jesuits, Sebastian committed himself to a crusade against the Muslims in Morocco. He led a force of warriors to Larache in 1578 only to see his army crushed by the Moroccans who greatly outnumbered them. He is thought to have died in the battle, but rumours he survived persisted, leading to a legend that he would one day return (or 'awaken') to free Portugal from Spanish rule.





The Sausage-Maker

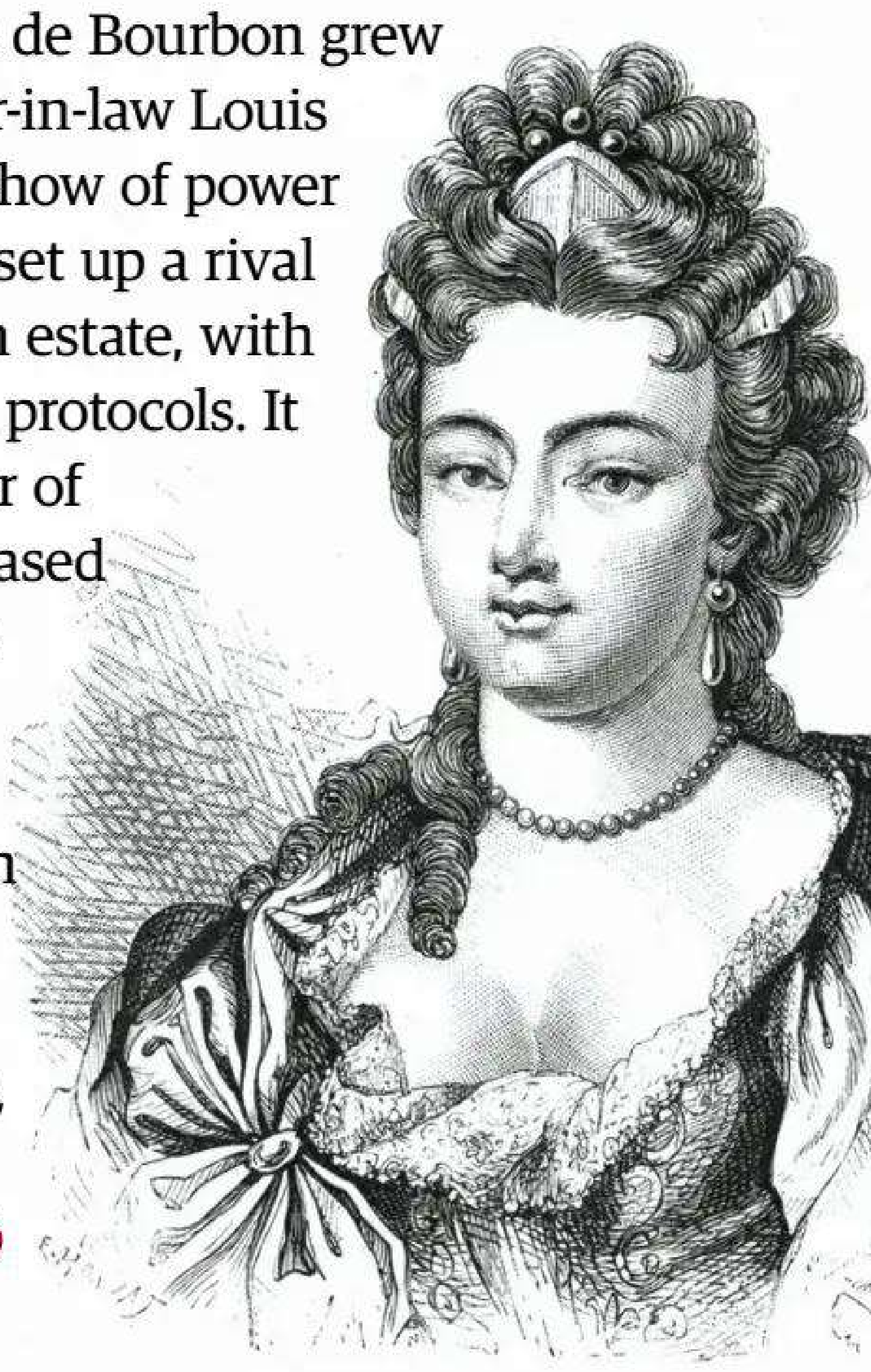
Count Manuel Godoy, Prime Minister Of Spain, 1767 – 1851

Reading how other nobles talked about and treated Godoy, you would think he was a peasant elevated to nobility. In reality he was from a noble, but poor, family and rose in influence after catching the eye of Maria Luisa of Parma, wife to the future Charles IV. An affair followed as did numerous titles and honours, not least two terms as prime minister. His nickname of *Choricero* was a contemptuous reference to the popular food in his home of Extremadura.

The Queen Of Bees

Anne, Duchess Of Maine, 1676 – 1753

What happens when a woman wants to escape the stuffy halls of power of early 18th century France? She mocks them, of course. When Anne Louise Bénédicte de Bourbon grew tired of her father-in-law Louis XIV's grandiose show of power at Versailles, she set up a rival 'court' in her own estate, with mock rituals and protocols. It included an Order of the Honey Bee, based on her nickname as 'queen' of her own realm. Medals were even made with the inscription "She is small, it is true, but she inflicts great wounds." ○



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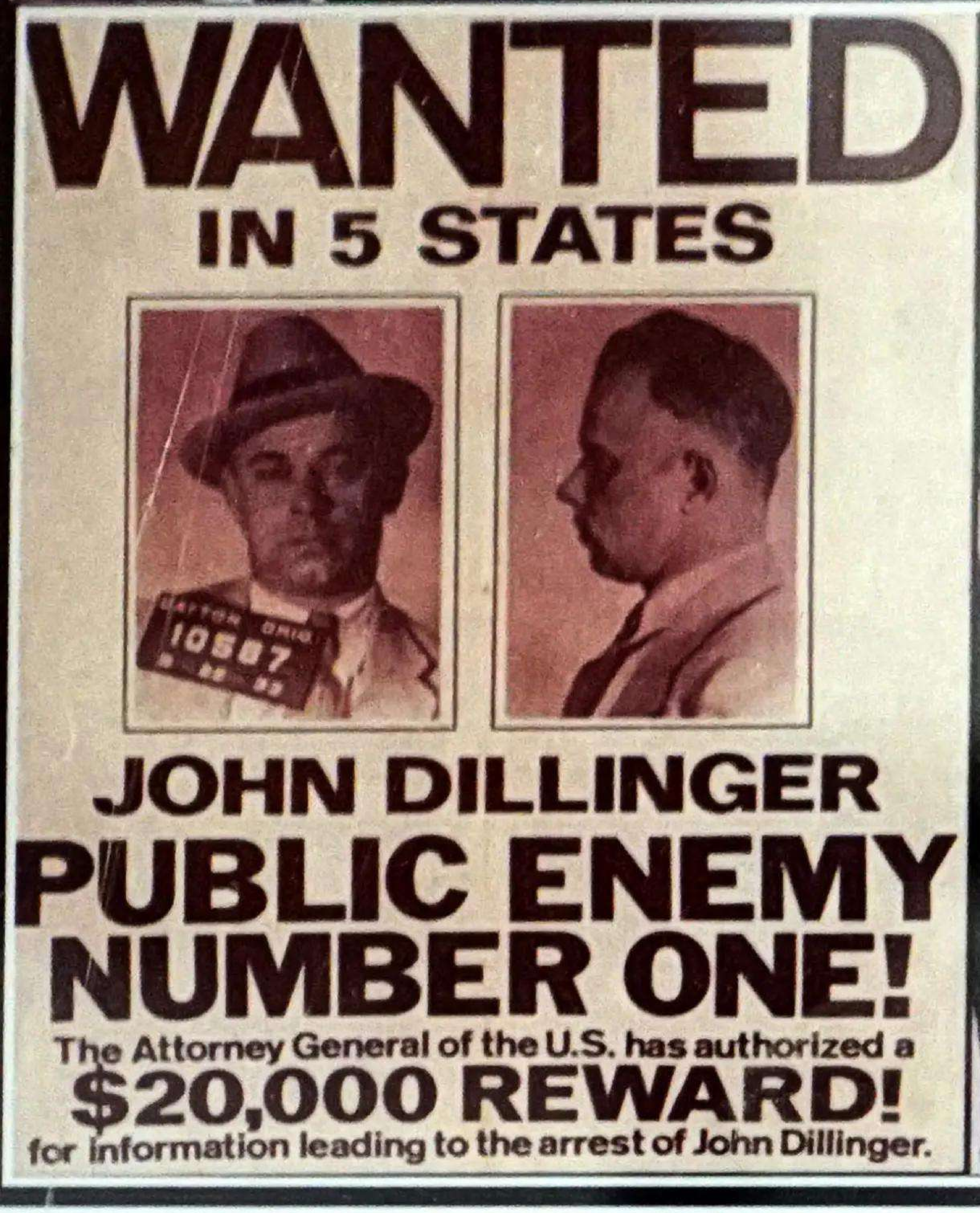
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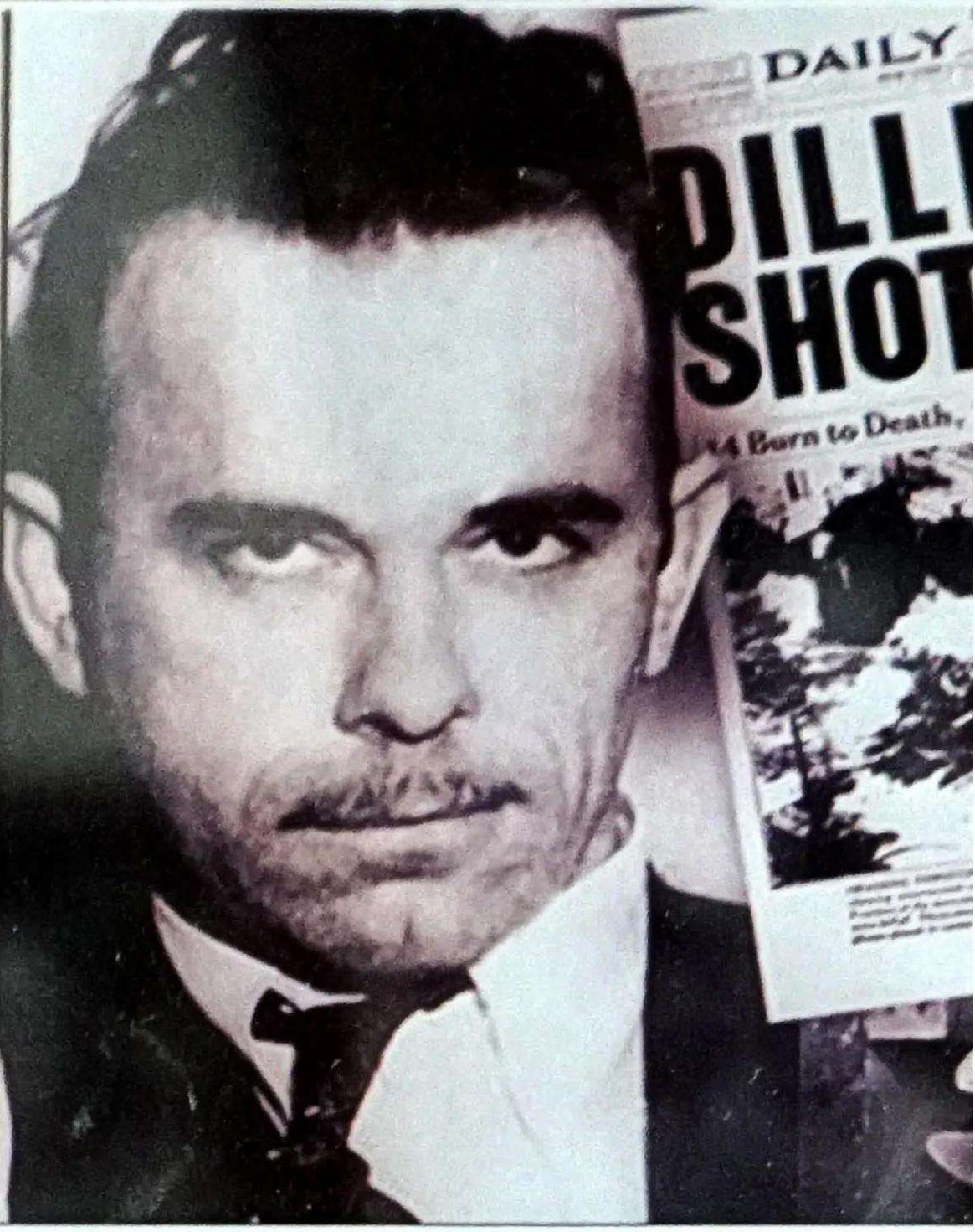
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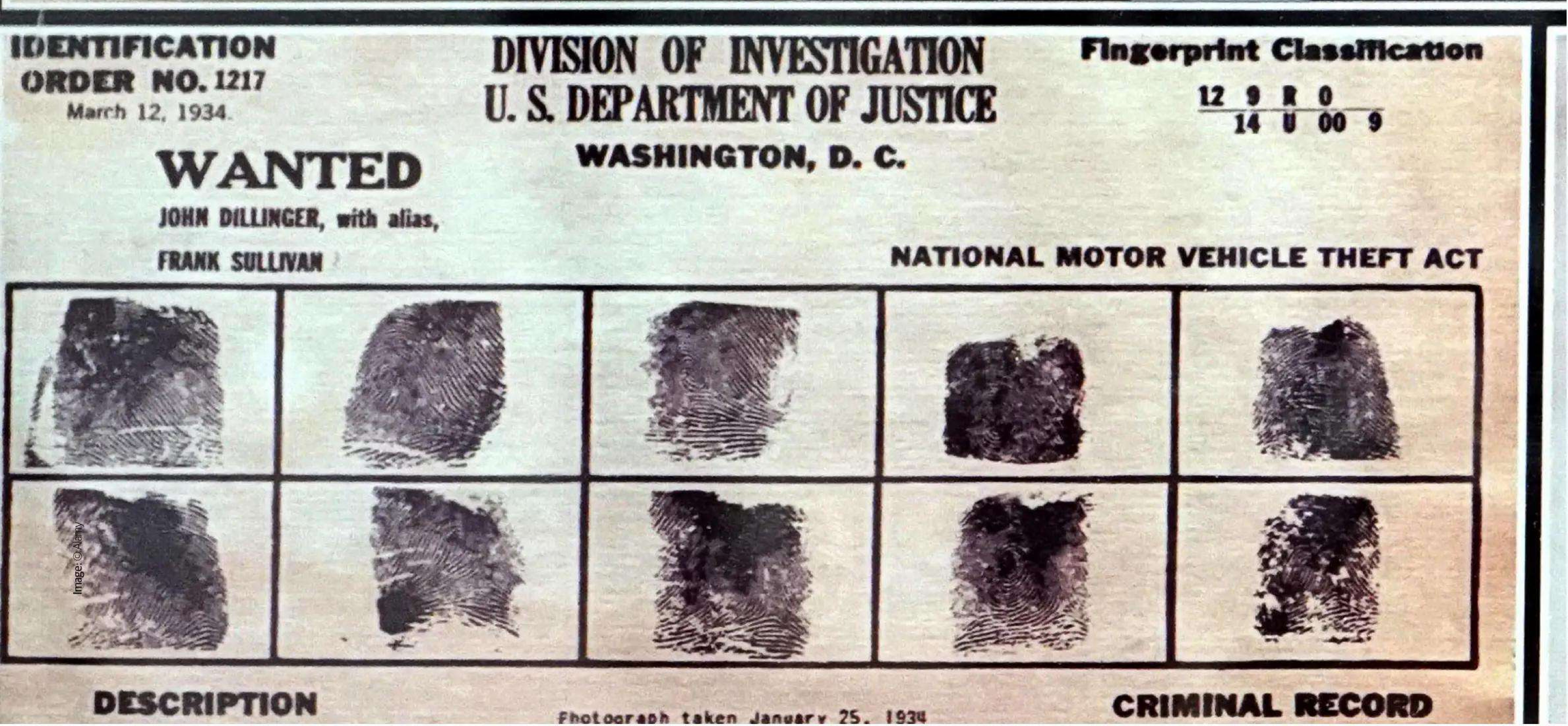

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March 12, 1934.

DIVISION OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
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FRANK SULLIVAN

NATIONAL MOTOR VEHICLE THEFT ACT

DESCRIPTION

Photograph taken January 25, 1934

CRIMINAL RECORD

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FOR QUEEN, COUNTRY... AND COIN

TUDOR PIRATES

Discover the gentlemen thieves who terrorised the high seas on Elizabeth's orders

Written by Mathew Lyons

Illustration by: Kevin McGiven

On 7 September 1592, the Madre de Dios was brought into the harbour at Dartmouth. Seven decks high and weighing some 1,600 tons, it was the largest ship England had ever seen. It was also the most treasure-filled. Its hold was packed with luxury goods: silk, damask, taffeta, calico; carpets, quilts, canopies; pepper, cloves, nutmeg, cinnamon; frankincense, camphor; ivory, ebony, and items of porcelain.

The Madre de Dios belonged to Portugal, a Spanish dominion since 1580. It was bringing merchandise back from the East Indies. Early on the morning of 3 August, to the west of the Azores, it had been spotted by a fleet of some seven English ships, most dispatched for just such a purpose by Sir Walter Raleigh. By 10am, the English were close enough to open fire. The fight was long and brutal, lasting through nightfall until around 2am.

When it was over, there was no time to waste. The English boarded their prize in darkness. On deck they found carnage. "So many bodies slain and dismembered... miserable people, whose limbs were so torn with the ▶

violence of shot," one report runs. "No man could almost step but upon a dead carcass or a bloody floor."

But English seamen swarmed through the ship, candles in hand, ransacking it cabin by cabin. The surviving Portuguese huddled in dark corners, crying *misericórdia* – mercy, mercy – surrendering again and again to whatever Englishmen they met. By the time Sir John Burgh came aboard, some time after daybreak, to claim the ship for Elizabeth I, its cabins had largely been stripped bare.

Every man for himself

How much was it all worth? The Portuguese were said to value the ship's cargo at four million ducats – around a million pounds at the time. There were rumours in the Azores that there were precious stones worth another million on board. But when all the goods were finally tallied back up in London, they were only valued at £141,000. A fortune, but some way short of a million.

"The largest piece of jewellery – alone worth some £125,000 – was never traced"

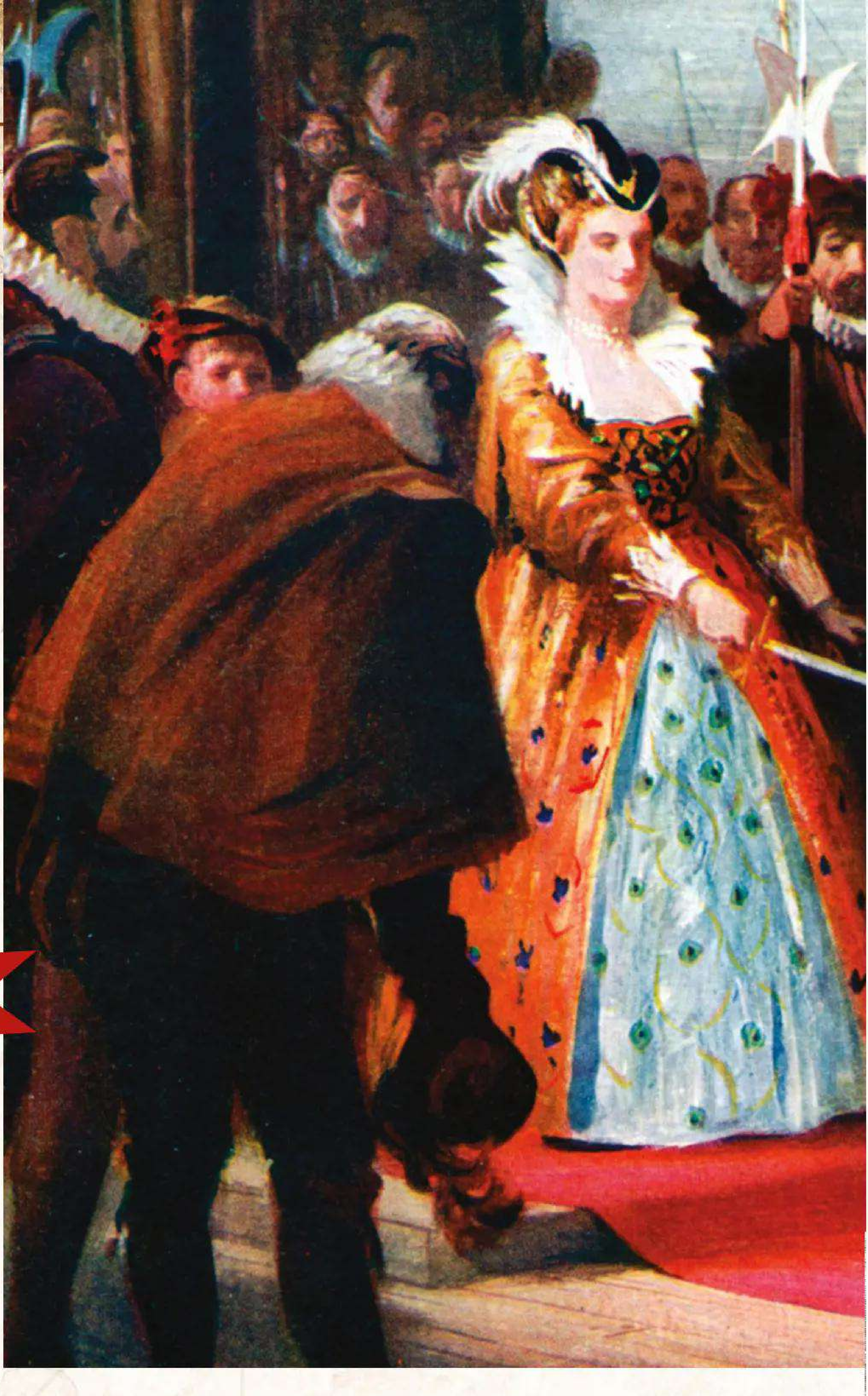
What had happened to all those precious stones? No-one quite knows. But the general sense is clear enough: as one investor in the fleet said, it was all down to "the thievery of these lewd fellows". The largest piece of jewellery – a great diamond pectoral cross – was alone worth some £125,000. It was never traced. Agents from London's jewellers were waiting for the ship when it docked. One merchant named Bradbent bought 1,800 diamonds and over 500 rubies.

Elizabeth I, who had a ten per cent stake in the syndicate behind the voyage, rewarded herself half of the ship's value. She took it in the form of pepper, its most plentiful commodity. There were, in fact, some 3,652 bags of it – too much for a single trader to buy. Another syndicate was formed, which bought the pepper for a little over £80,000. The queen had to issue a warrant prohibiting the import of pepper for at least a year to help it recover its money.

But why was the Queen of England supporting piracy?

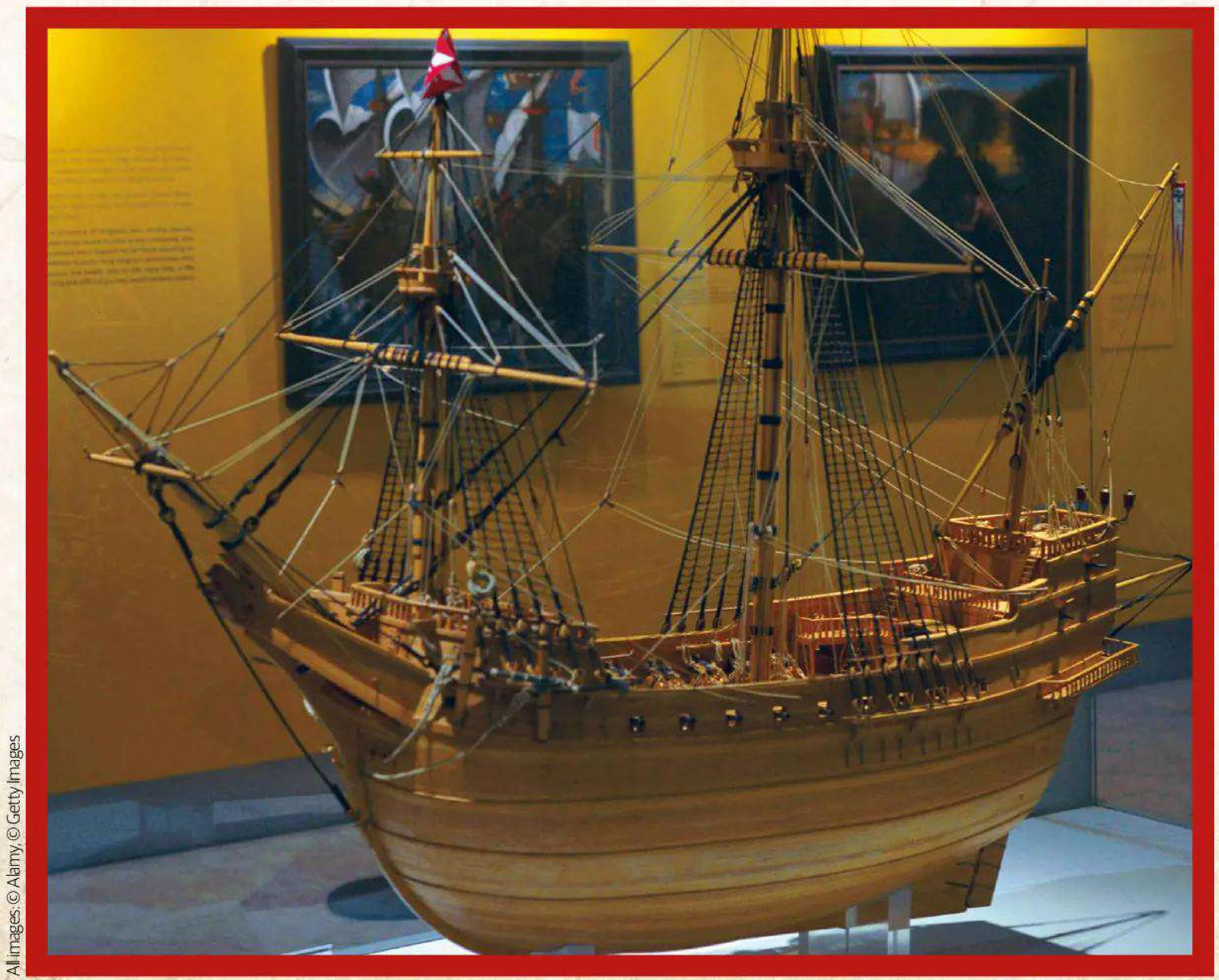
Retribution and just reward

Strictly speaking, voyages like those that seized the Madre de Dios weren't piracy at all. They operated under letters of reprisal, also known as letters of marque, a widely accepted form of retributive justice that dated back to the Rôles d'Oléron, an international maritime law from the 12th century. If a merchant's goods were seized in a foreign country, he could apply for a letter of reprisal through the Court of Admiralty, which allowed him in return to seize money or goods from that country up to the value claimed. The system was certainly abused and often ignored; but there *was* a system.



ABOVE Francis Drake was knighted by Queen Elizabeth I aboard the Golden Hind after circumnavigating the globe

RIGHT Pirates were violent men, but more died at sea from disease and infection than died in combat



LEFT A model of Portuguese ship the Madre de Dios, which was captured and plundered by English ships

All images © Alamy, © Getty Images

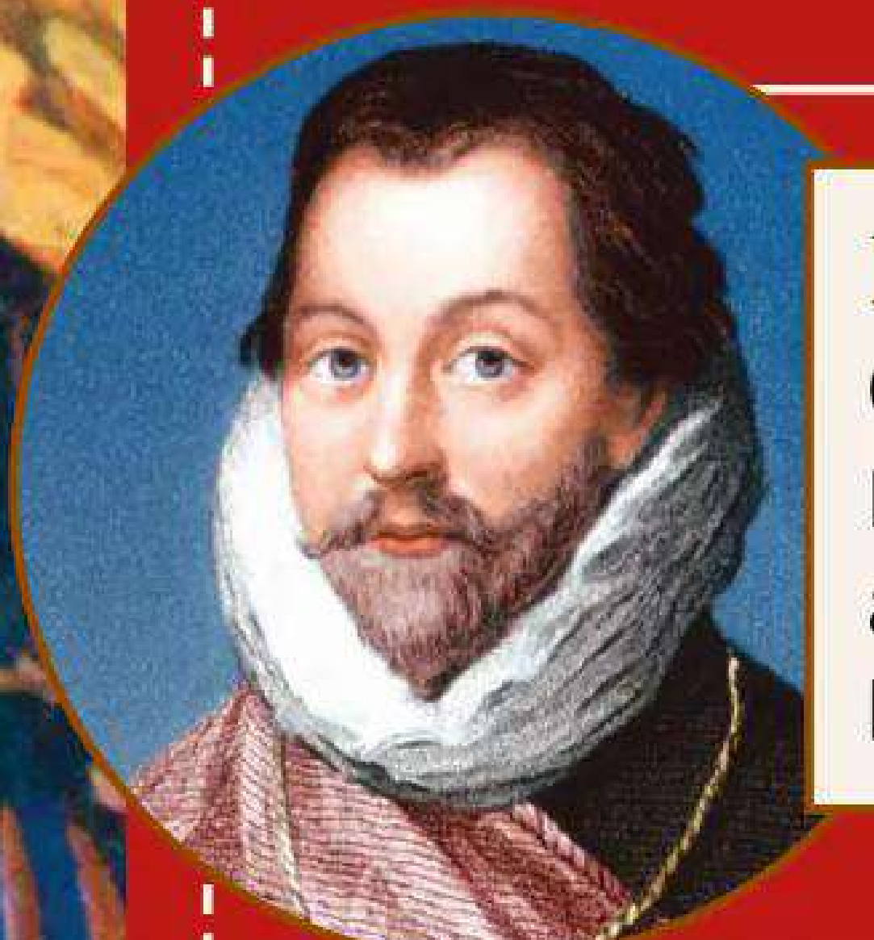
Which is to say, there was a line. But the line moved – and men jumped back and forth across it. Pirates were hunted down and hanged throughout Elizabeth's reign. But pirates were also regularly employed on state business. This English ambivalence about piracy wasn't something that developed from fear of imperial Spain; it is there right from the moment Elizabeth ascended the throne.

Henry Strangways – Dorset-born but typically operating out of Ireland since the late 1540s – captured some Portuguese ships from Antwerp in early 1559. By August he was in the Tower of London awaiting execution. Time passed. Nicholas Throckmorton, the English ambassador to Catholic France, lobbied on his behalf. By October 1562, Strangways was on his way from Portsmouth to Le Havre in command of a galley and 80 men to fight alongside England's Huguenot allies.

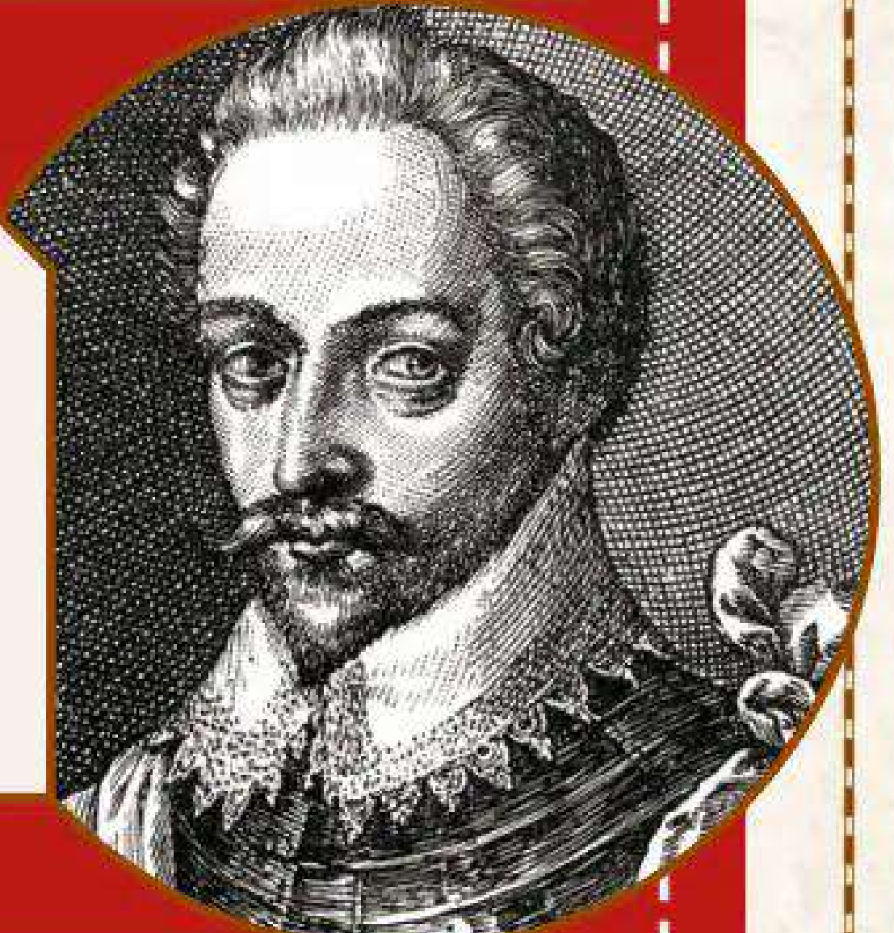
Naturally, this ambivalence – this sense of a movable line – cascaded through the system. The mayor of Cork refused to act against pirates because the local economy needed their merchandise; in Cardiff, ▶

ELIZABETH'S SEA DOGS

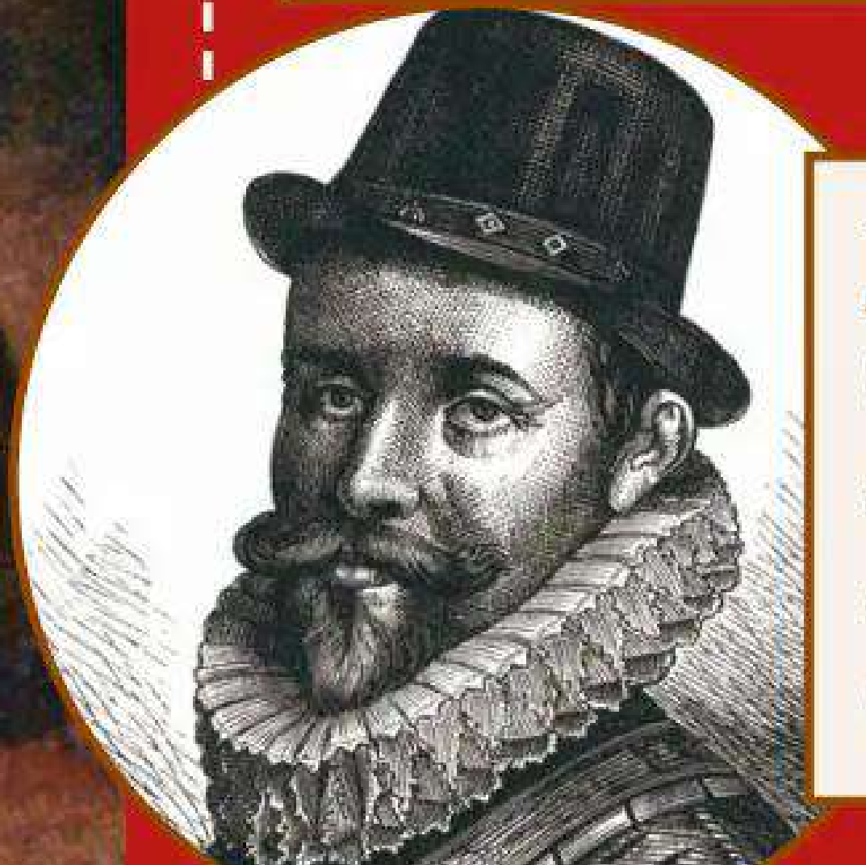
The men who conquered the seas for their queen



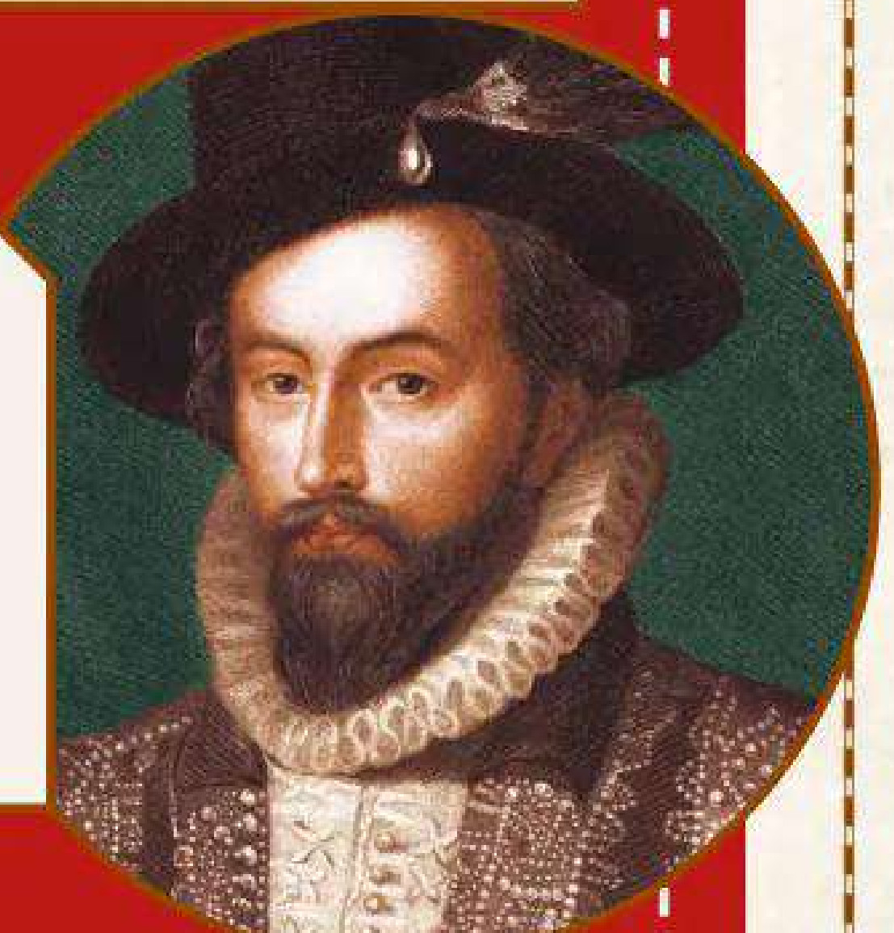
Francis Drake *c.1540-1543 – 1596*
One of the most famous of the Tudor era's seafaring gentlemen, Drake was raised by the Hawkins family, well-known merchants and privateers. Drake would go on to circumnavigate the globe between 1577 and 1580 alongside trips to the West Indies.



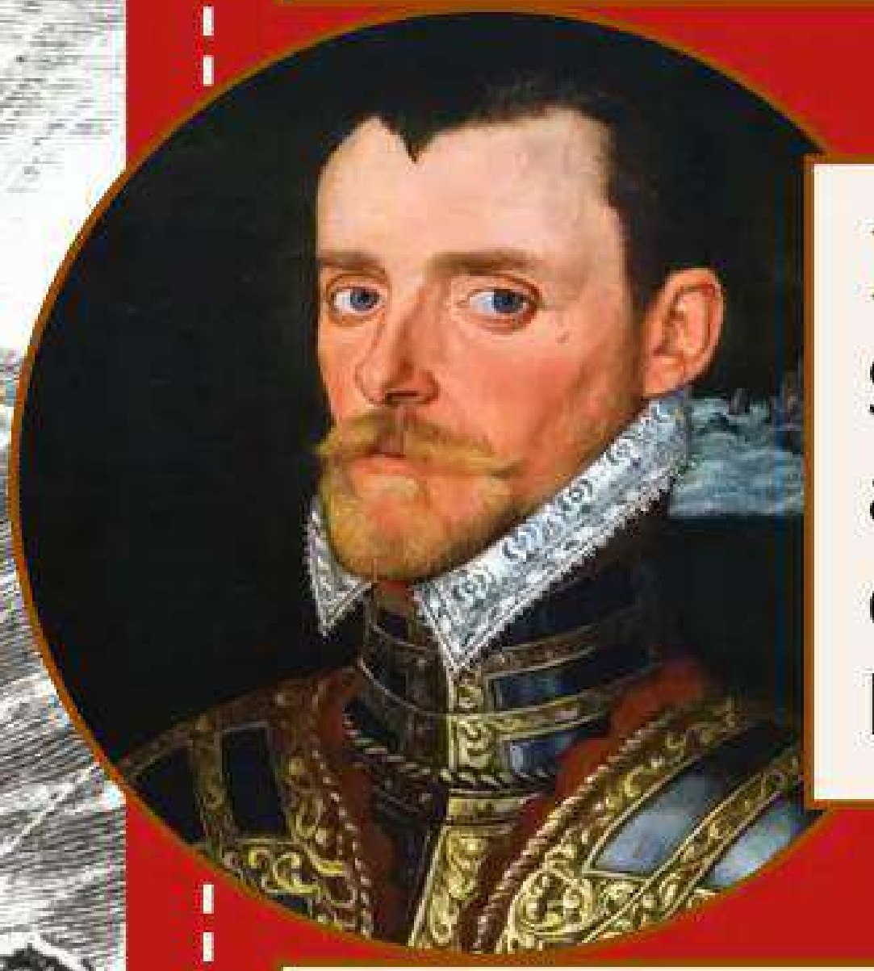
Humphrey Gilbert *c.1539 – 1583*
Having studied navigation and military science at Oxford, Gilbert became a celebrated seaman and annexed Newfoundland. He was commissioned by Elizabeth I to put down rebellion in Ireland and tried, but was unable, to establish a colony in North America.



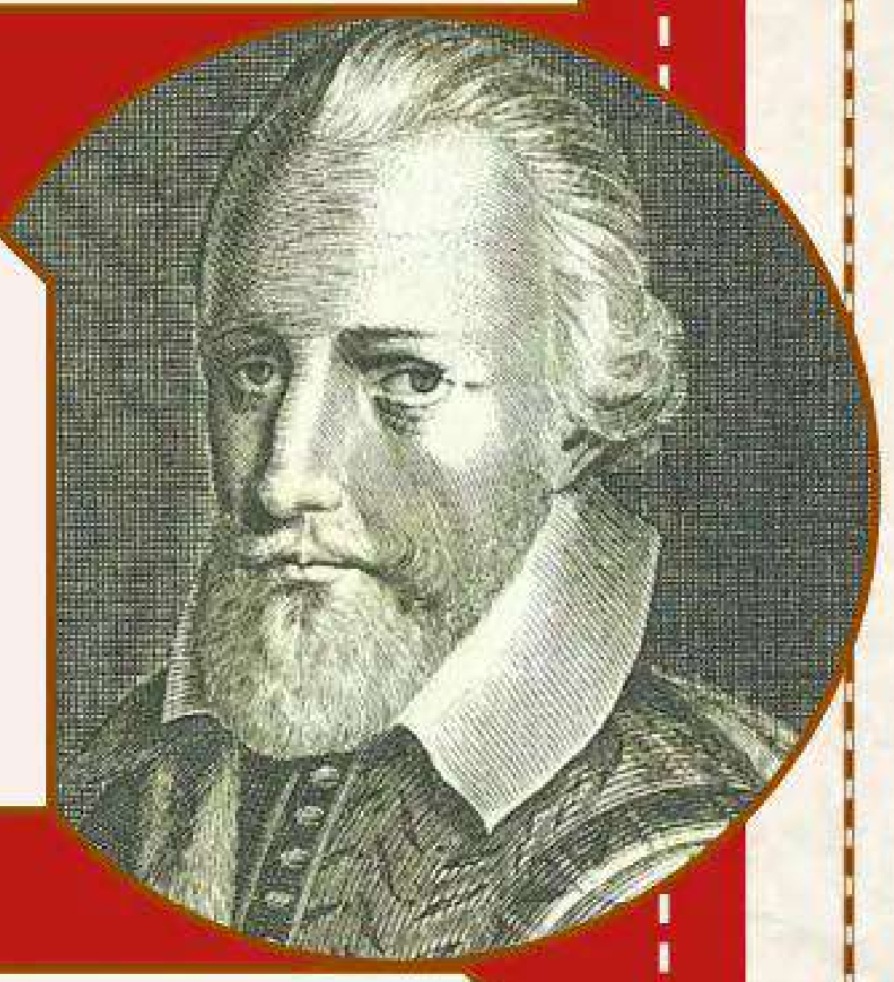
John Hawkins *1532 – 1595*
Credited as the architect of the Elizabethan navy, Hawkins was also the first English slave trader. He was appointed treasurer of the navy, where he commissioned the new, faster ships that withstood the Spanish Armada.



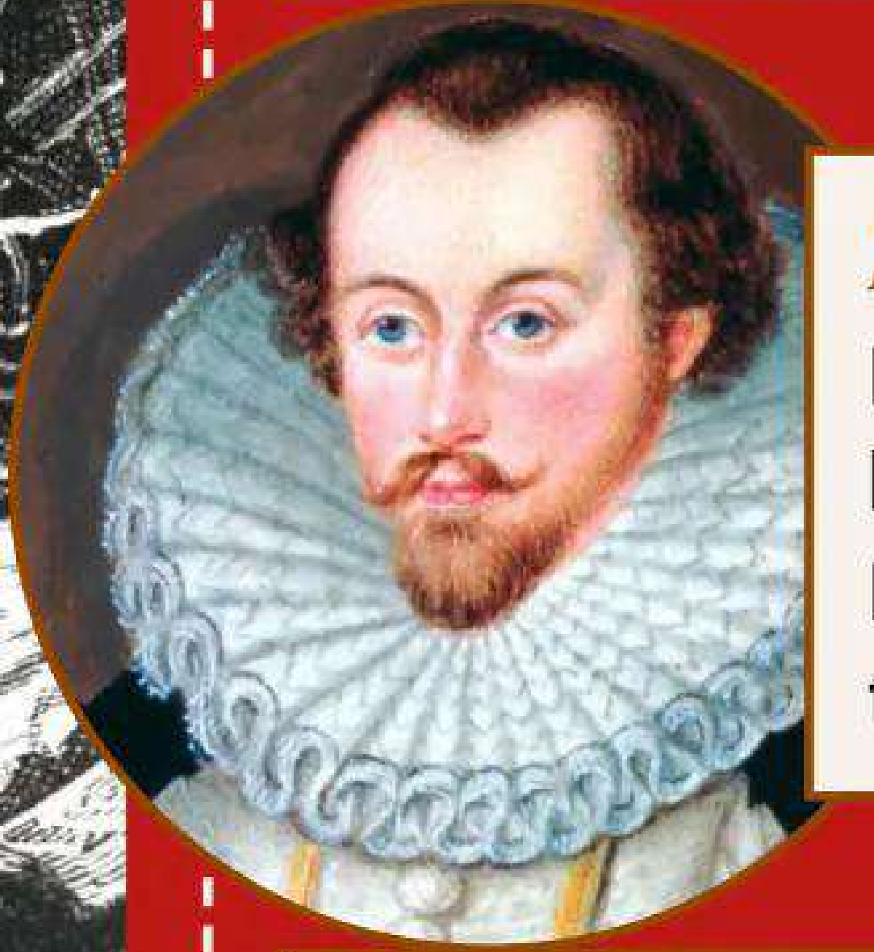
Walter Raleigh *c.1554 – 1618*
Raleigh went from a knight under Elizabeth to being accused of treason under James I, dying in the Tower of London. With a lust for adventure and spending money, he had set out in search for El Dorado, among other expeditions of his famous seafaring life.



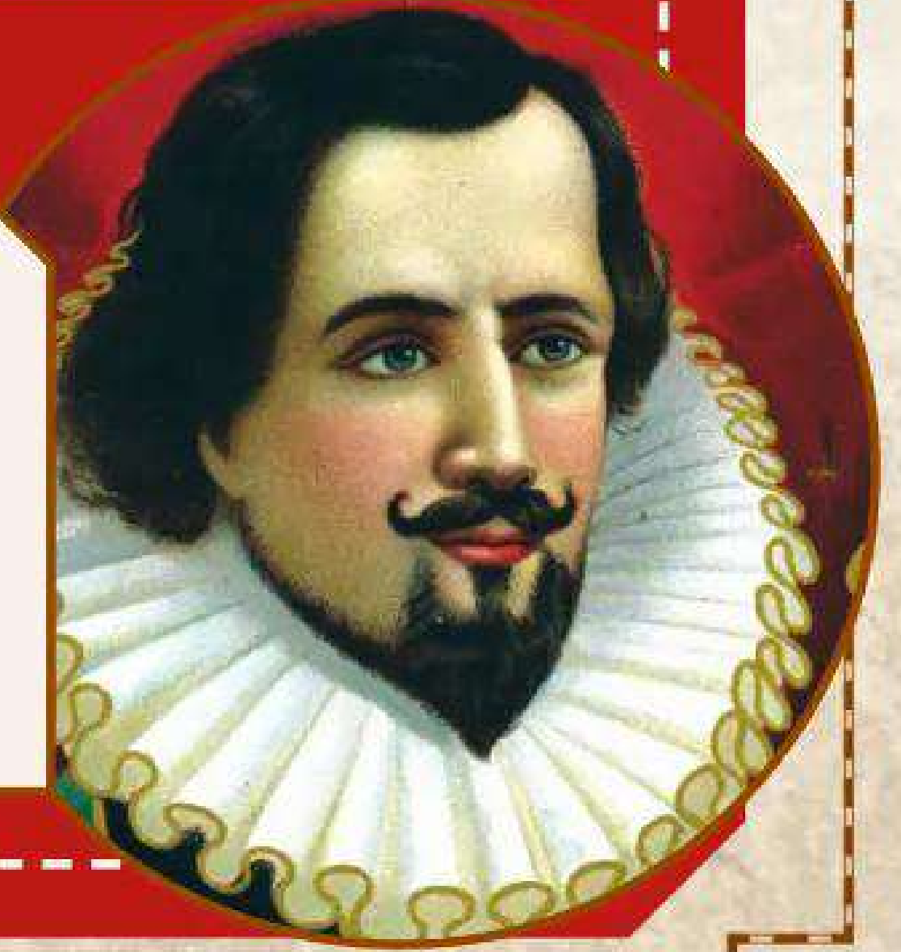
Richard Hawkins *c.1560 – 1622*
Son of John Hawkins, Richard first set sail with his uncle in 1582 and was commanding a ship under Drake by 1585. He was a captain during the Spanish Armada campaign. He wrote a book on his experiences, *Observations In His Voyage Into The South Sea*.



Richard Grenville *1542 – 1591*
As well as being involved in a number of military campaigns, Grenville is best remembered as the commander of the fleet that took 100 colonists to Roanoke Island in 1585 and ramming his ship, the Revenge, into Spanish ships in 1591.



Martin Frobisher *c.1535 – 1594*
Frobisher began his sailing career working the coast of Guinea before privateering in the English Channel, raiding French ships. However, he went on to search for the Northwest Passage, leading to much exploration of what is now Canada's northeast coast.



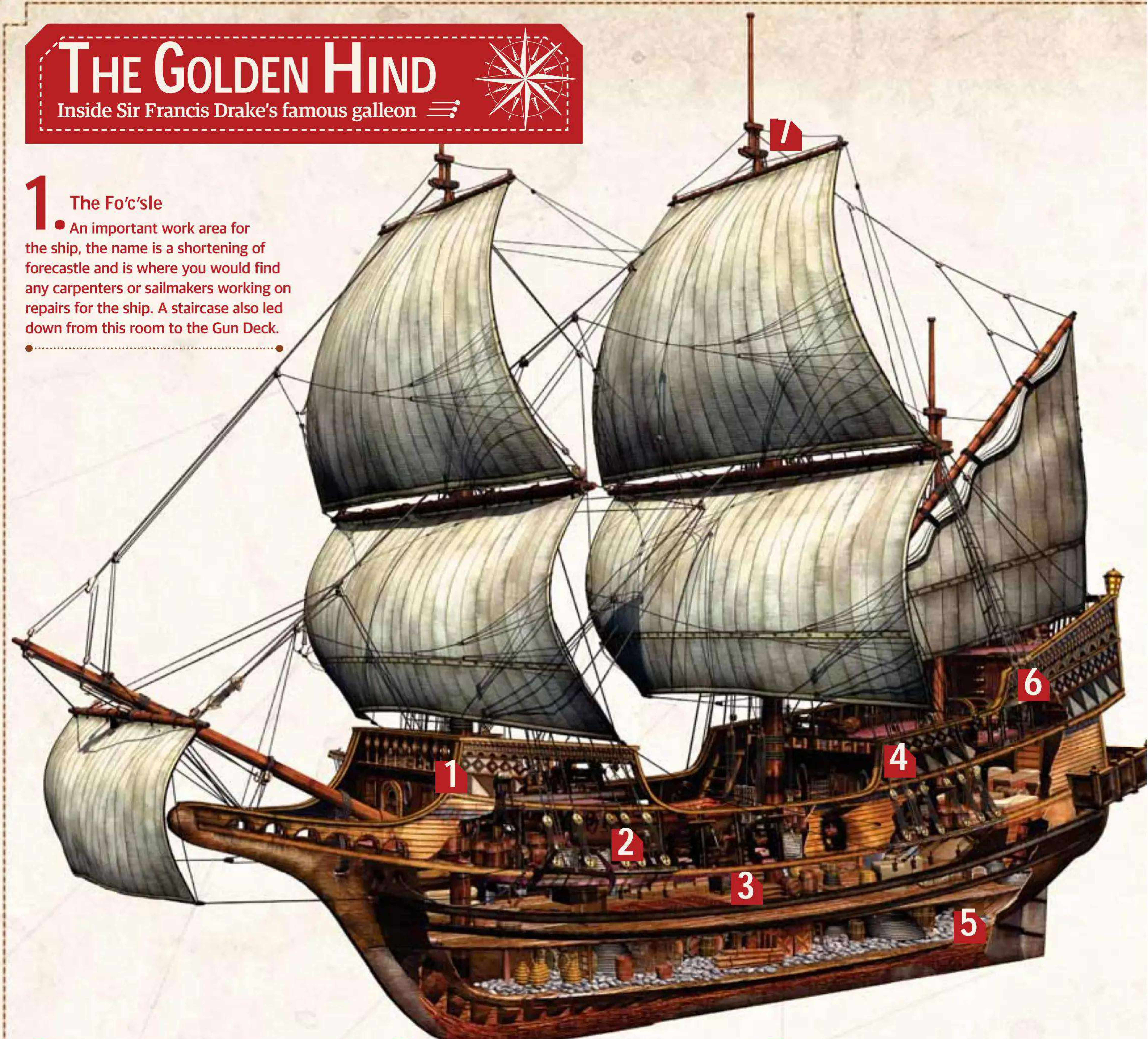
John Davis *c.1550 – 1605*
Another sailor keen to find the Northwest Passage, Davis began his hunt in 1585 without success. He did seem to have good relations with the Inuit population of Greenland, however, and discovered the Falkland Islands in 1592.

THE GOLDEN HIND

Inside Sir Francis Drake's famous galleon

1. The Fo'c'sle

An important work area for the ship, the name is a shortening of forecastle and is where you would find any carpenters or sailmakers working on repairs for the ship. A staircase also led down from this room to the Gun Deck.



2. Gun Deck

A notable feature of the Gun Deck was its low ceilings. This was to keep the weight of the ship's guns just above the water line, making the ship much more stable. The Hind had 14 Minion Guns with a range of 275 metres (300 yards).

3. Hold

Much as its name suggests, this is where all goods on the ship were held, but also where prisoners went as the brig was located here too. An opening on the Main Deck led directly down to the hold for delivering treasure and supplies.

4. Armoury

An important part of the ship, this is where the small arms were kept to be handed out during battle and where the anchor would be raised from. The officers of the ship would sleep in this room to defend it and be ready for action.

5. Bilge

This section of the ship contained rocks and sand to add weight and balance to the craft below the water line. Drake had replaced some of the ballast with silver after raiding the Cacafuego and having no room left in the hold.

6. The Great Cabin

More often than not, this is where you would find Drake communing with his officers. Here is where meals would be served and where recreational games with cards or dice might be enjoyed. Just behind it was Drake's personal cabin.

7. Cross Trees and Fighting Top

The cross above the sail was a lookout post with sailors tying their legs to the mast for stability. Just below (behind the sail) was the Fighting Top, where archers and arquebusiers would be positioned during battle.

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the magistrate Thomas Lewes habitually released on bail any pirates who were unlucky enough to get arrested. Across the country, vice-admirals, charged with suppressing piracy, turned a blind eye to it in return for cash.

Infested waters

Piracy wasn't simply a problem for Spanish or other Catholic shipping. In 1577, Henry Hastings, the earl of Huntingdon and president of the Council of the North, complained of "the great disorders of pirates upon the coasts, which if not seen into, the merchants and fishermen will hardly be able to go forth". At the end of the following decade, Sir Francis Walsingham, the queen's spymaster, was informed that, "All the boroughs and towns in Scotland are inhabited by Protestants, but so wounded with infinite piracies… that they cry out that more than the third part of their goods is possessed by pirates of England."

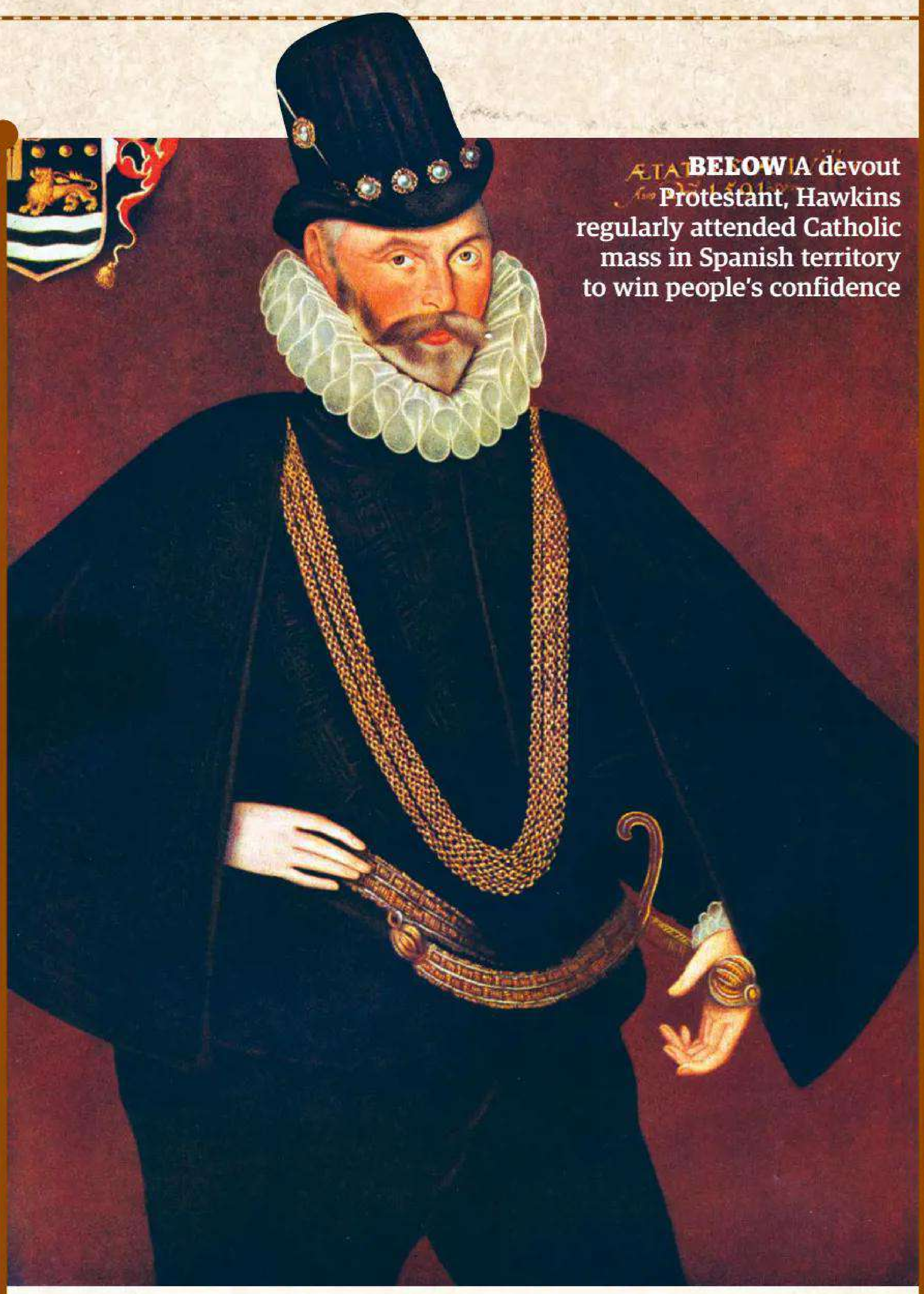
"On board the Minion, the men ate rats and made stews from ox hide"

But there is no question that the Spanish were a particular target. In August 1571, De Spes, the Spanish ambassador, complained that 14 Spanish ships fitted out "for the suppression of the pirates infesting the Channel" were fired at by the guns at Dover Castle, causing great injury. In 1582, his successor, Mendoza, bitterly noting the activities of a Bristol pirate named Roberts, off-loaded his frustrations to Walsingham. "I am much annoyed at having to be always troubling you about the robberies of pirates," he wrote. "In the four years I have been here, and in all the similar complaints I have made, it is never settled."

For the glory of God

Tensions between the two nations dated back to the reign of Henry VIII. In 1543, Henry VIII aligned with Spain and declared war on France. English ships were licensed to seize enemy ships and merchandise. The English were none too discriminating in which foreign ships they targeted, and when Spain made peace with France they stopped discriminating at all.

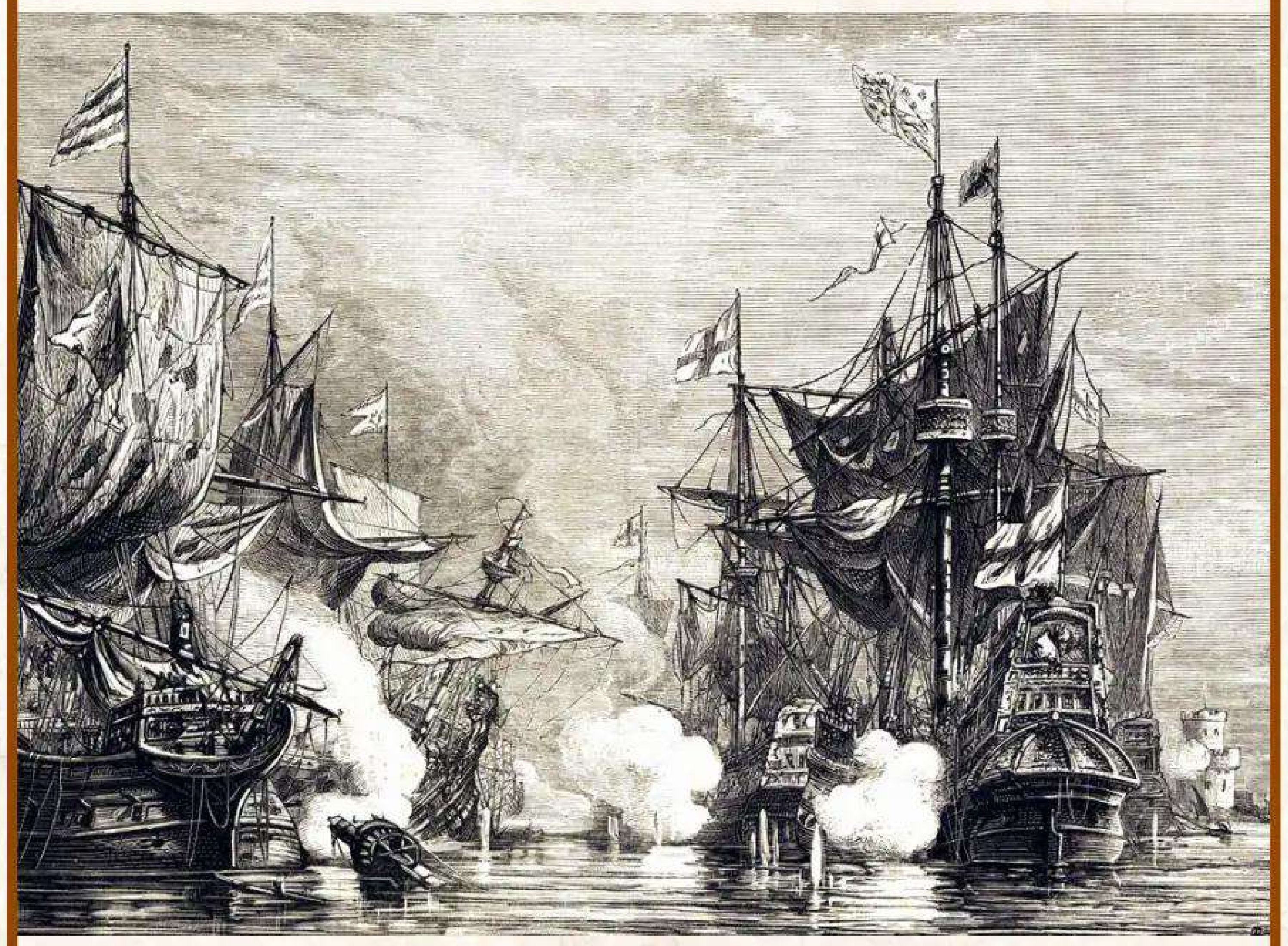
By the 1560s, with the eruption of the French wars of religion and later the Dutch revolt, English ships were preying mercilessly on French Catholic and Spanish shipping from the Straits of Gibraltar through to the North Sea. They sailed under commissions from the likes of William of Orange or the Huguenot admiral Gaspard de Coligny. These seamen were certainly motivated by money; but patriotism played its part too. And then there was their Protestant faith.

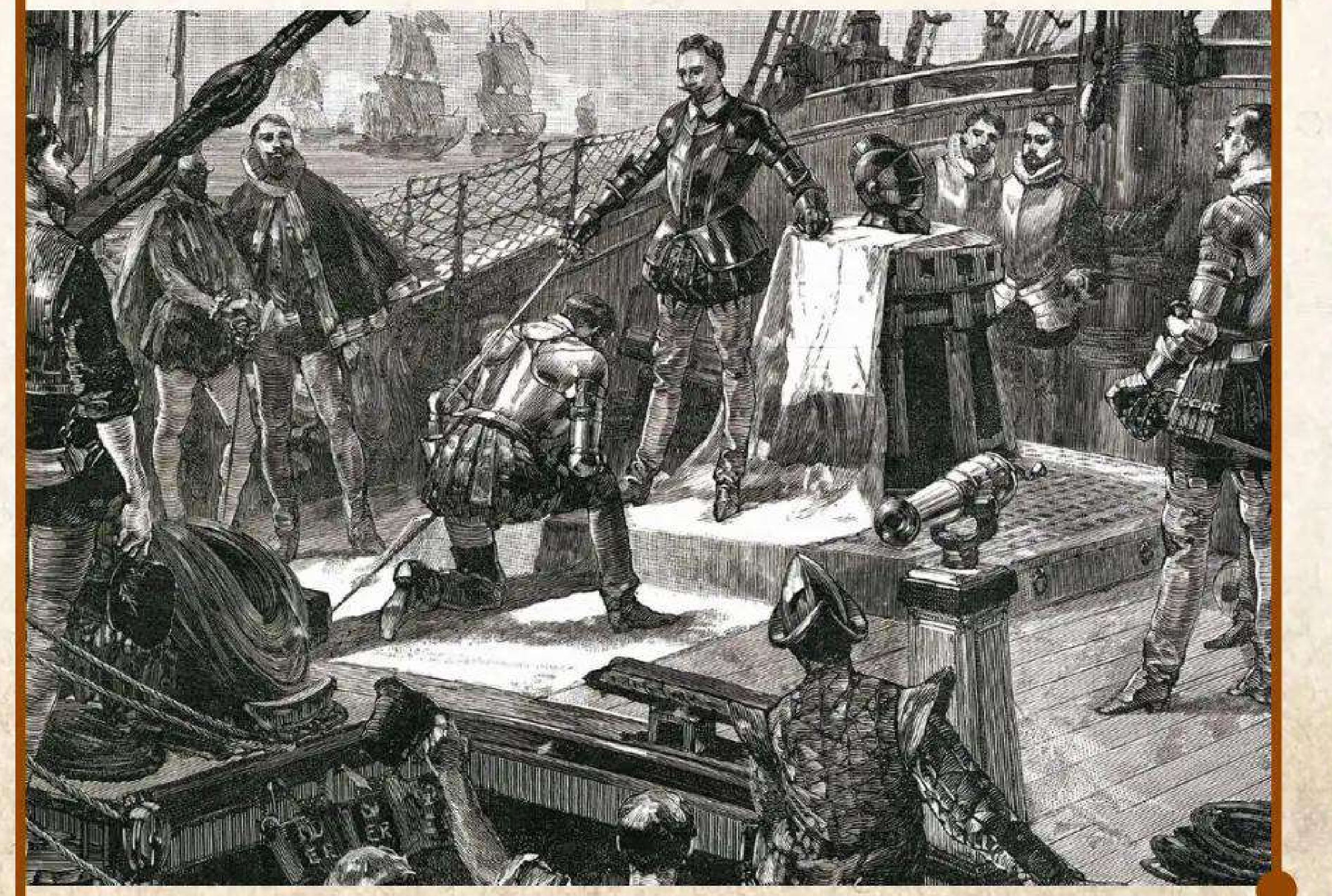


BELOW A devout Protestant, Hawkins regularly attended Catholic mass in Spanish territory to win people's confidence

BELOW Hawkins lost several ships in the Battle of San Juan de Ulúa, including the 700-ton Jesus of Lubeck, which belonged to Elizabeth I

BOTTOM Lord Howard of Effingham, admiral of the English fleet, knights the victorious captains





John Hawkins led his men in daily prayers aboard ship. "Serve God daily, love one another, preserve your victuals, beware of fire and keep good company," he ordered his crew. And Richard Grenville spoke for many when he argued in 1574 that those parts of South America not actually occupied by Spain or Portugal – almost all of it, therefore – was "by God's providence left for England". But it was Hawkins who first pointed English ambition towards the Spanish Americas.

An American future

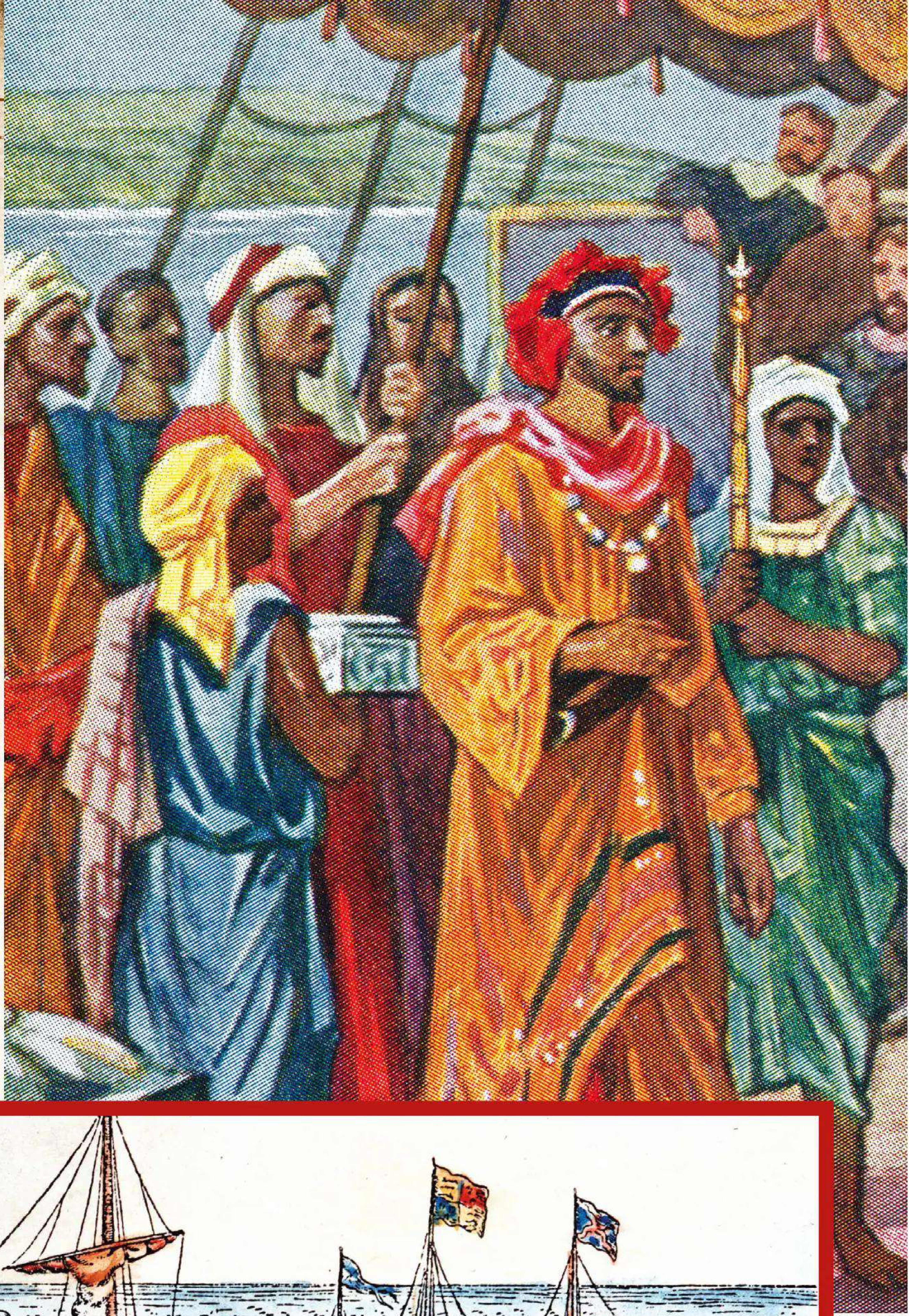
English merchants could trade on equal terms in Spain, thanks to a treaty negotiated by Henry VII. But the New World was different. All American trade was processed through Seville; ergo, any attempts to trade directly was in Spanish eyes *de facto* piracy. This was not new information: the English had traded in Spanish American goods through Seville since at least 1509.

Hawkins made two profitable but illegal voyages to the West Indies in 1562 and 1564, in both cases dealing in African slaves he had taken in Sierra Leone. The Spanish ambassador in London made Hawkins swear an oath not to enter Spanish-American waters again. But he did, of course and his third voyage, which sailed in October 1567, ran into trouble.

Hit by Caribbean storms in August the following year – the hull planking of one ship sprang "leaks so big as the thickness of a man's arm [and] living fish did swim upon the ballast as in the sea" – he took his fleet into San Juan de Ulúa, an island harbour in the Gulf of Mexico. Hawkins then seized the island.

Unfortunately for him, a Spanish fleet appeared on the horizon the following morning. A few days later, they attacked. Hawkins lost several ships and at least 90 men. Two ships survived: the Minion, under Hawkins, and the Judith, under a young Francis Drake.

Drake was ordered to come alongside the Minion to take on board some men. Instead, under cover of darkness, Drake sailed for home. "The Judith forsook us in our great misery," Hawkins said. Whatever he thought of the ethics of Drake's choice, Hawkins was faced with a practical problem. Drake had sailed off with all the



food. On board the Minion, the men ate rats and parrots and made stews from ox hide. Around 15 survived the journey back.

For queen and country

As relations between England and Spain deteriorated, so voyages of reprisal – and no doubt outright piracy – began in earnest. There were legitimate mercantile claims, but there was a political argument too. As Walter Raleigh later said, "it is [Spain's American] gold that endangereth and disturbeth all the nations of Europe". To seize Spanish treasure then, either at source or in transit, would alter the balance of power.

Enter Francis Drake again. He made two modest sallies into Spanish waters in central America in 1570 and 1571, attacking small shipping along the coastal inlets around Nombre de Dios in Panama, where the Spanish collected all their silver from the Americas – often brought overland on mule trains – before shipping it back annually to Spain. He sailed again in 1572. This time he partnered with some Huguenot corsairs and, more importantly, with two communities of escaped African slaves who had established themselves on the isthmus.

Together they attacked the mule train. The attack wasn't wholly successful; they had to leave much of the treasure behind. But Drake probably took some £20,000-worth back to England. He arrived in Plymouth in August 1573 a local hero; it is said the congregation of St Andrew's church rushed out in mid-sermon and swarmed down the hill to greet him. In Spain too his name was beginning to be noticed with foreboding.

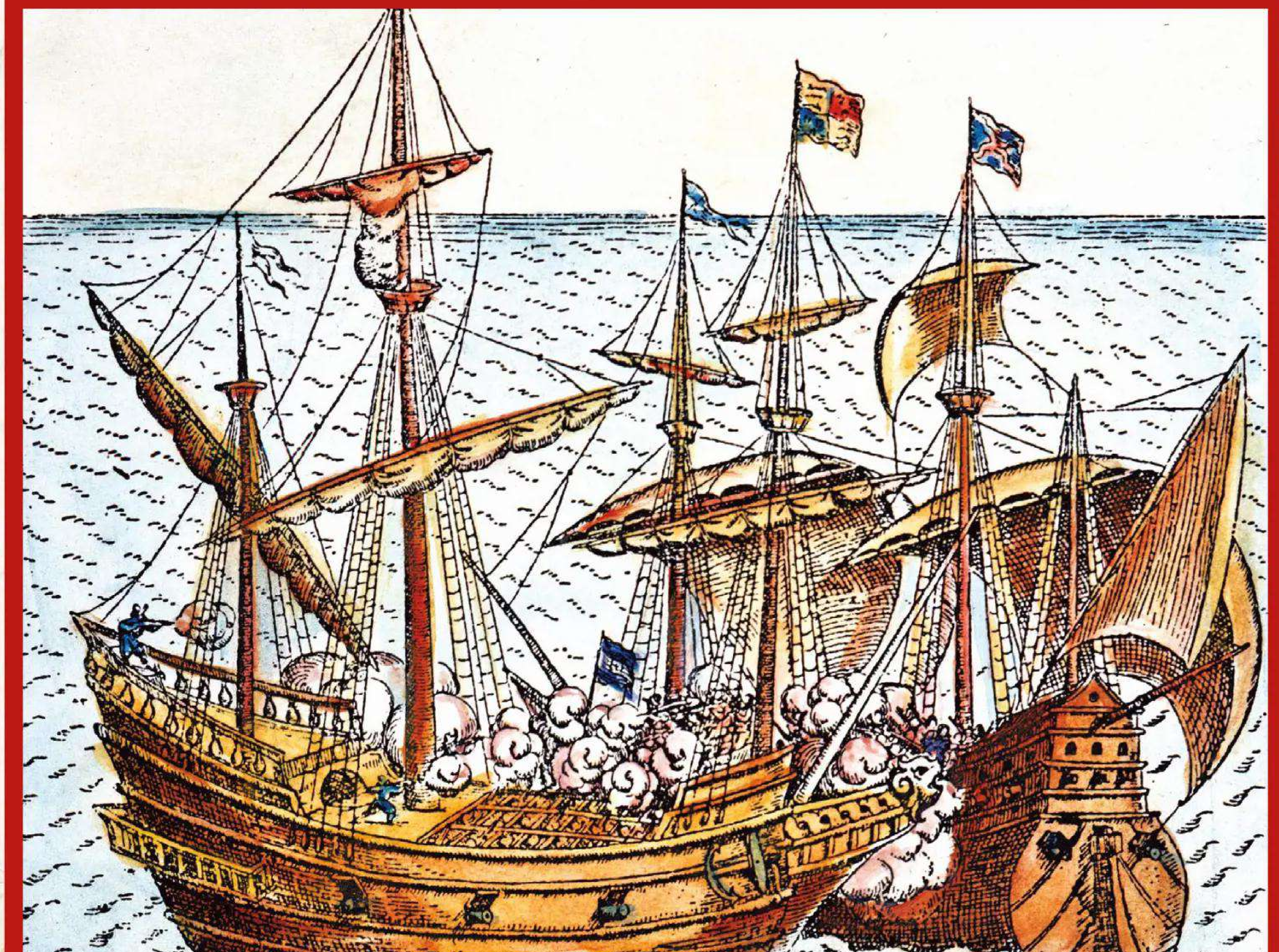
A world within grasp

In 1577, however, he set out on the global voyage that would cement his legend forever. But it was never Drake's intention to circumnavigate the world. The plan was to sail through the Strait of Magellan and plunder the western coast before returning home the same way. It was, in part, a commercial venture; one aim was to seek out peoples who might have gold and silver or spices to trade. It was also in part imperial, scouting for possible territory "not under the obedience of any Christian prince" where England might plant a colony. But it was also a voyage of reprisal, even if Drake never bothered with formalities like acquiring a letter from the Court of Admiralty. To deceive the Spanish, the voyage was publicly described as a trading venture to Alexandria.

Drake's fleet got under way at the end of 1577. By the time they reached the

RIGHT Drake's travels brought him before numerous foreign leaders

BELOW The Golden Hind capturing the Nuestra Señora de la Concepción off the coast of Peru in 1579



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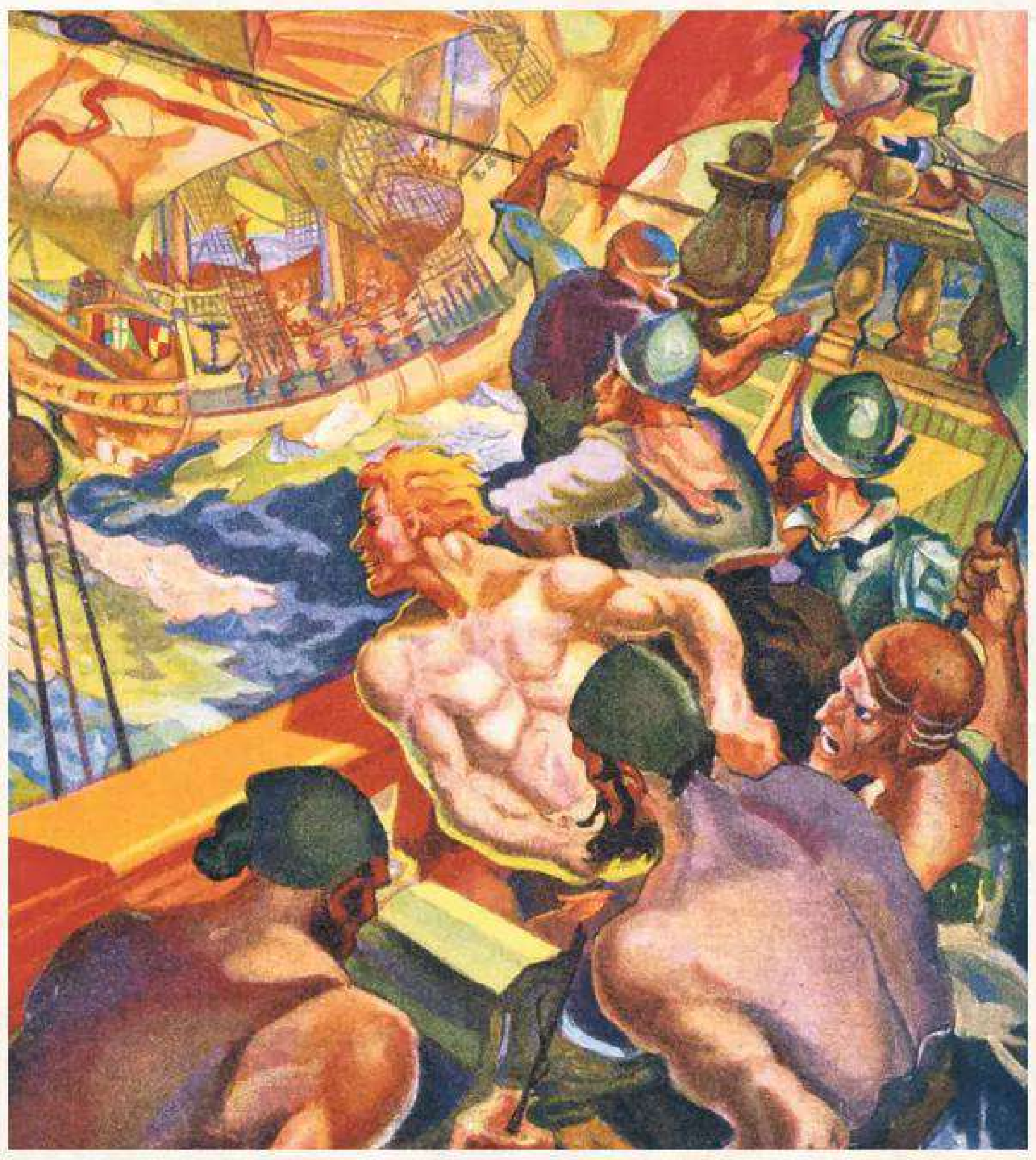
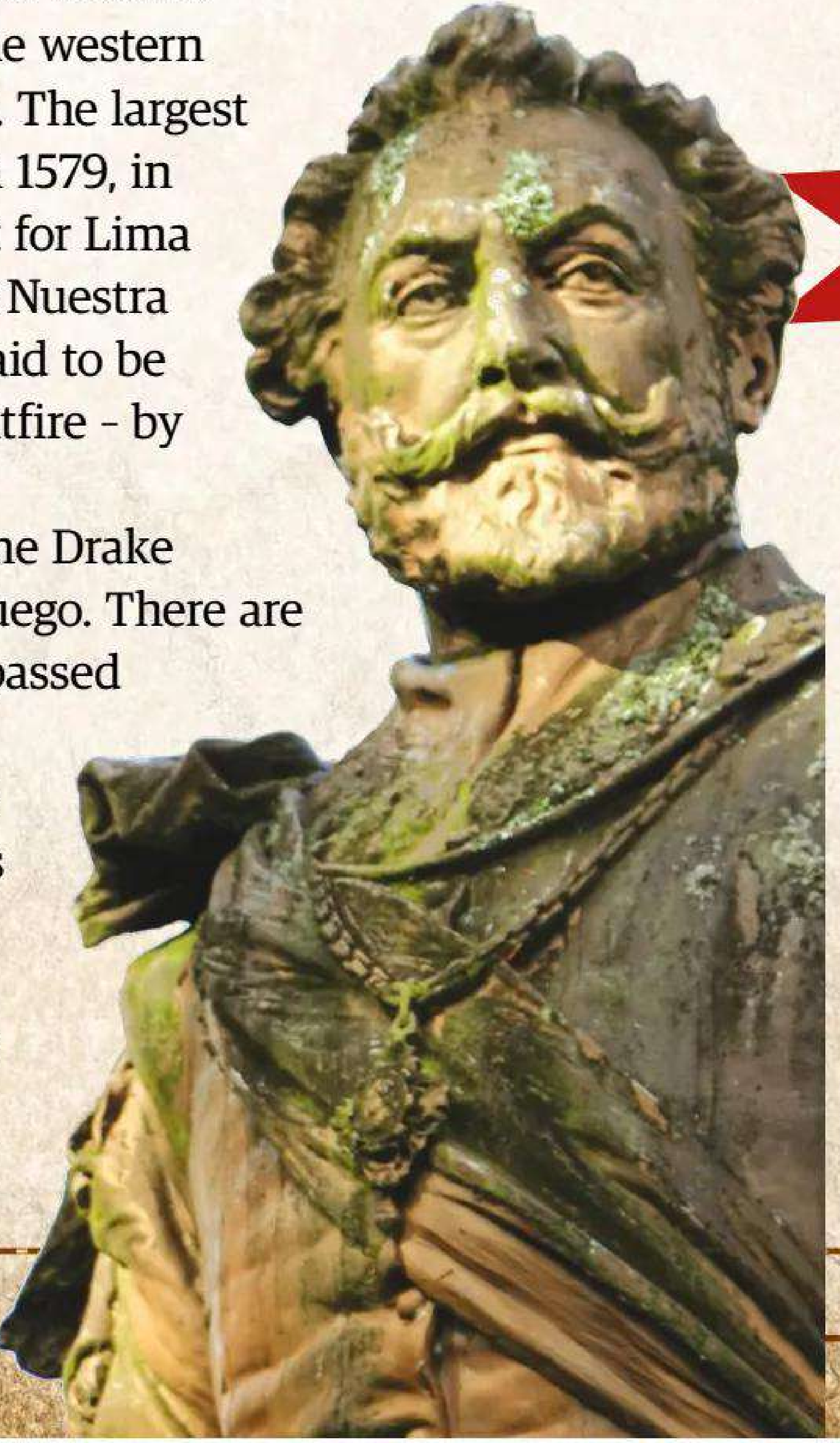


ABOVE Despite sacking three Spanish towns, Drake's 1585-6 raid on the West Indies failed to recoup on its investment

LEFT Privateers waisted no opportunities for plunder when they saw them

Strait of Magellan only one ship remained, Drake's flagship the Pelican, which he renamed the Golden Hind in honour of Sir Christopher Hatton, who was an investor. Rounding the southern coast of Chile he took to plunder along the western seaboard of South America. The largest prize was taken on 1 March 1579, in the seas off Callao, the port for Lima a few miles east. It was the Nuestra Señora de la Concepción, said to be nicknamed Cacafuego – shitfire – by the Spanish.

It was evening by the time Drake pulled alongside the Cacafuego. There are different versions of what passed between him and the latter's master, San Juan de Antón, but one of them has Antón replying to Drake's demand that he surrender by saying, "What old tub is that which orders me to strike sail?" The Golden Hind opened fire while its men leapt aboard. The battle was over before it had begun. The ship's cargo included silver bars, silver coins and gold, amounting to some £140,000 in value. "Our ship shall be called no more the *shitfire* but the *shitsilver*," its Spanish pilot reportedly said.



BELOW Francis Drake's success terrified the Spanish. They called him El Draque and imagined him as a dragon

> "It is Spanish gold that endangereth and disturbeth all the nations of Europe"

Drake sailed back into Plymouth on 26 September 1580. He wasn't a local hero, this time. He was a national hero. "His fame and name became admirable in all places," the historian John Stow wrote, "the people swarming daily in the streets to behold him, vowing hatred of all that durst mislike him."

Desperate times

Many plans to exploit Drake's circumnavigation followed in its wake. But the problem was, as Drake himself discovered when he returned to the West Indies in 1585-6, there was a difference between projecting power through piracy and raiding, which England did well, and maintaining it, which England lacked the capacity to do.

Perhaps the nation's reliance on men like Drake spoke as much to desperation and vulnerability as anything else. Year after year, Elizabethan seamen patrolled the Atlantic hoping to capture the biggest prize: the Spanish treasure fleet. England's ►

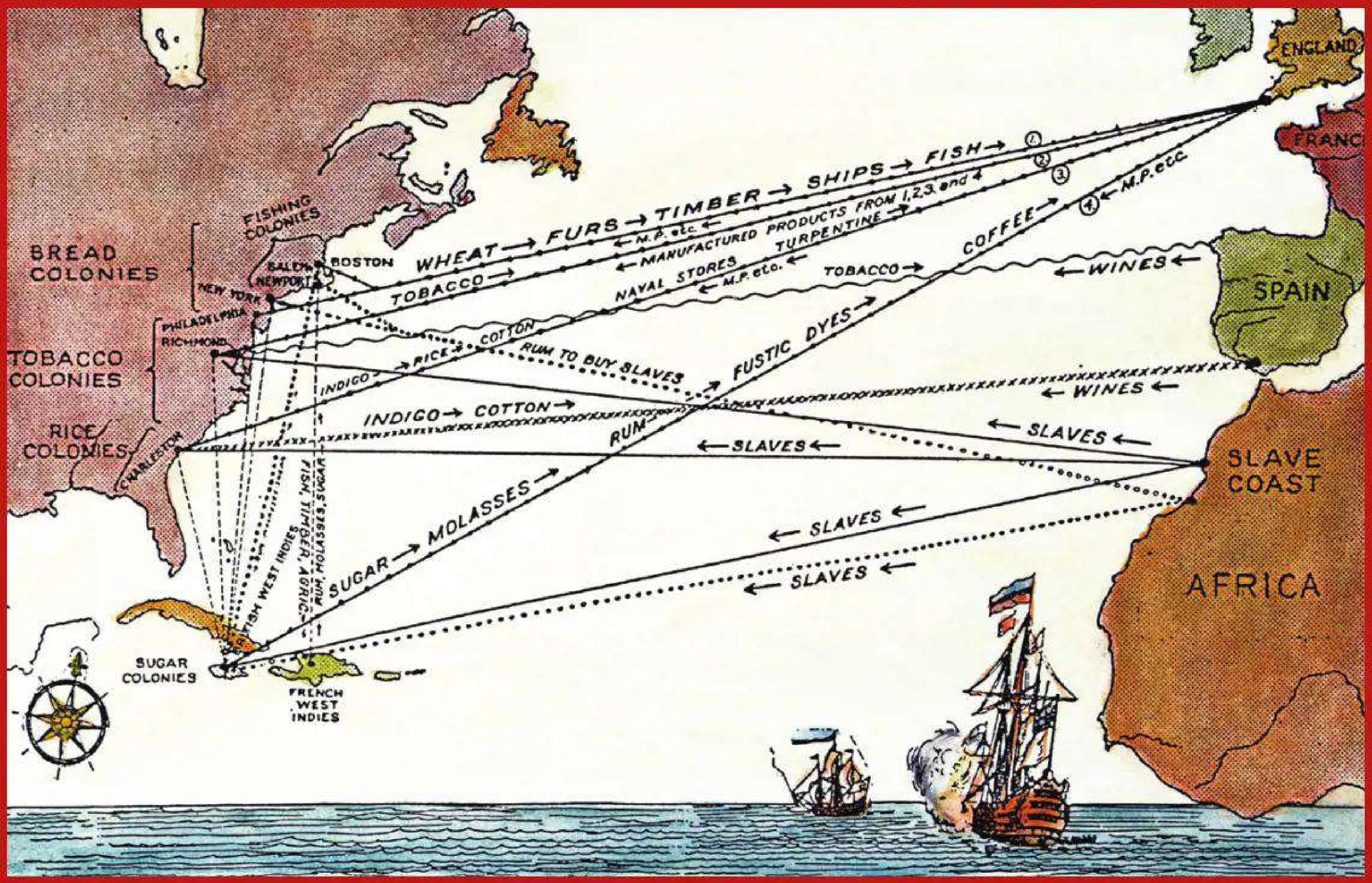
SEA DOGS AND SLAVERY

How their paths were blueprint for triangle trade

While Elizabeth's Sea Dogs are largely remembered for their confrontations on the high sea, they also played a role in the establishment of the Triangular Slave Trade. Trade routes across the Atlantic had been well travelled, revealing consistent and reliable winds and currents (the Gulf Stream) that could take ships back and forth to the Americas from Europe. Using these winds, traders gathered raw materials from the colonies, shipped them to Europe for manufacture and then traded those for slaves in Africa, who were then sent to the colonies to extract more raw materials.

Among the first to participate in this trade from England was Sir John Hawkins with Queen Elizabeth leasing him a 700-ton ship for one of his journeys. He and Francis Drake would capture African men and women and then sell them in the Caribbean and South America, looting enemy ships along the way. It's thought that in the five years Hawkins profited from this trade, he enslaved between 1,200 and 1,400 people. He was granted a special coat of arms by Elizabeth I, featuring a bound slave, for his efforts.

The resultant race for colonies, wealth and empire that followed was fuelled by this trading cycle and the establishment of the transatlantic slave trade that transported an estimated 10-12 million enslaved Africans.


ENGLAND
FRANCE
SPAIN
SLAVE COAST
AFRICA
FISHING COLONIES
BREAD COLONIES
TOBACCO COLONIES
RICE COLONIES
SUGAR COLONIES
FRENCH WEST INDIES
BOSTON
SALEM
NEWPORT
NEW YORK
PHILADELPHIA
RICHMOND
CHARLESTON
WHEAT → FURS → TIMBER → SHIPS → FISH →
← M.P. etc. ←
← MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS FROM 1,2,3 and 4
TOBACCO →
NAVAL STORES
TURPENTINE →
← M.P. etc. ←
TOBACCO →
COFFEE →
← M.P. etc.
← WINES ←
INDIGO → RICE → COTTON
RUM TO BUY SLAVES
FUSTIC DYES →
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FISH, TIMBER, AGRIC.
RUM, MOLASSES, SUGAR
BRITISH WEST INDIES

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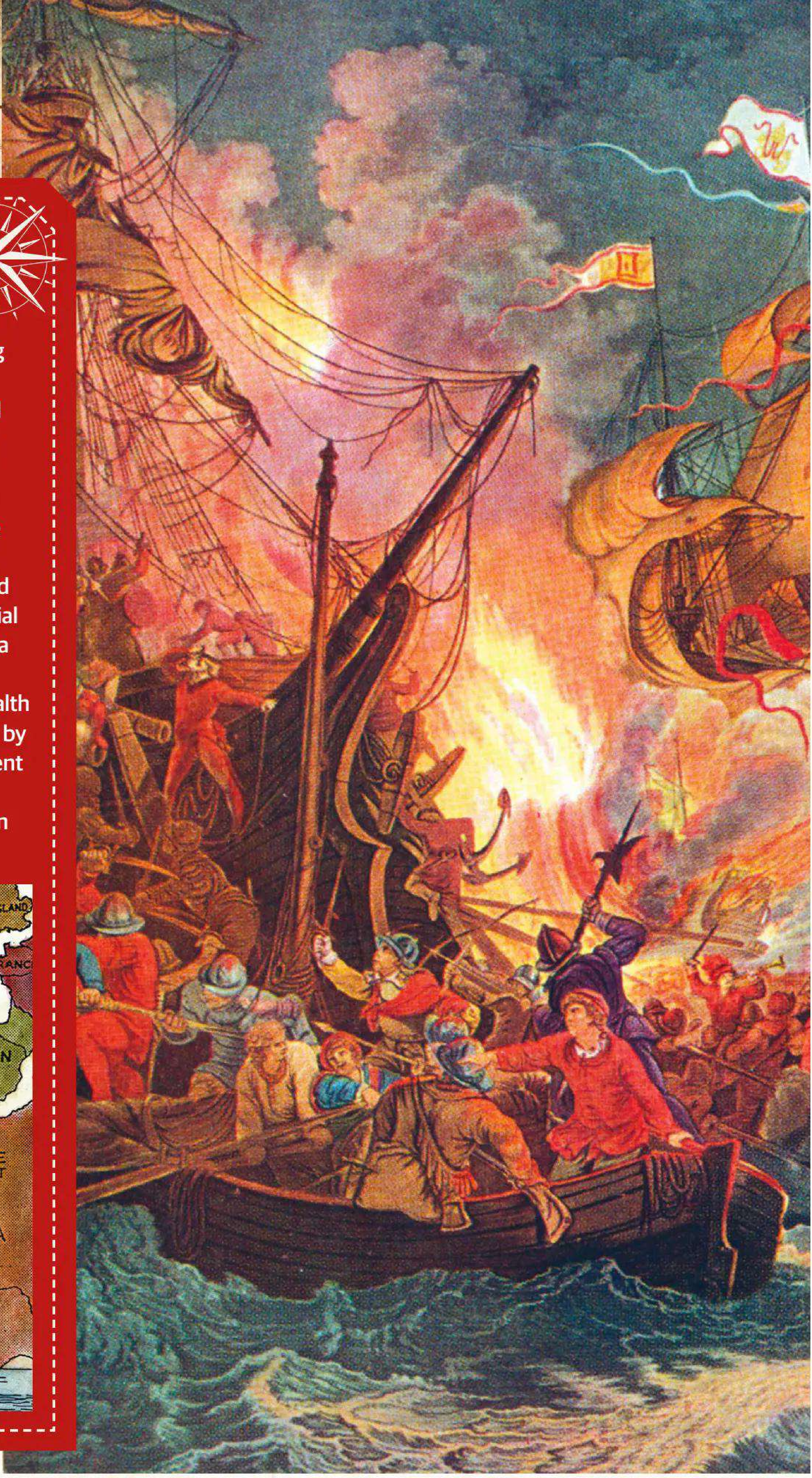


ABOVE The English naval fleet commanded by Lord Howard of Effingham and Sir Francis Drake defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588 after a ferocious battle

peril was surely imminent; perhaps its deliverance might be too. Drake's voyage of 1585-6 was something "whereupon dependeth the life and death of the cause", a despondent Walsingham wrote in July 1586, after a series of Spanish victories in the Low Countries. It did not, of course. But that it felt like it might to someone as clear-thinking as Walsingham is revealing.

Drake sacked Santo Domingo, Cartagena and San Agustin on that voyage, but the pickings were slim. At Santo Domingo, he demanded a million ducats to stop him destroying the town. When this was refused, he burned part of it down. It was a civic version of an old pirate torture: binding combustible matter between a man's fingers and applying a flame. Eventually, when only part of it was left standing, the town paid him 25,000 ducats. Drake burned it down anyway.

A national hero, but...

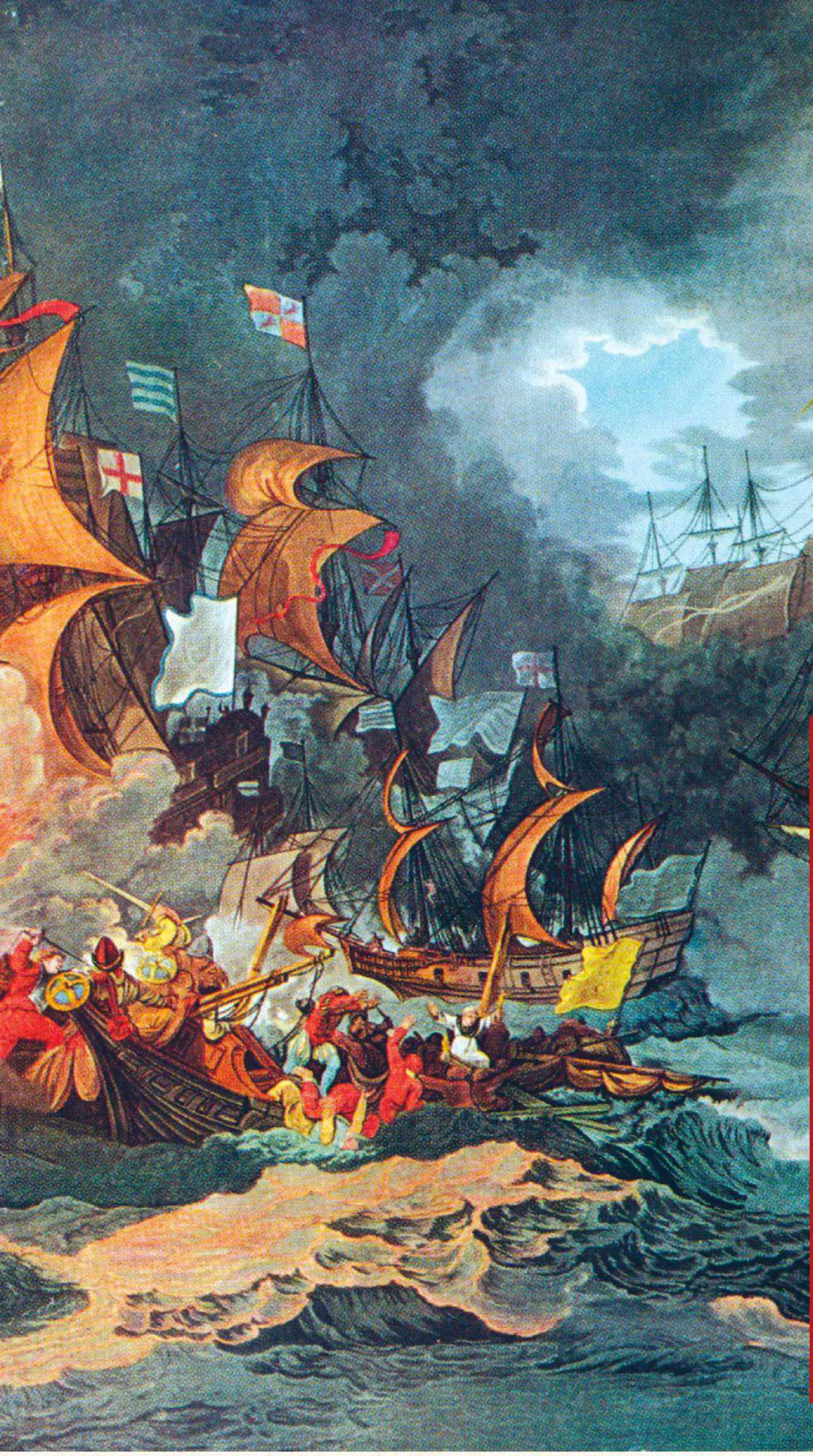
If at the state level there was a line between piracy and reprisal, where was the private, ethical line between self-interest and national interest? It's hard to know. Towards evening on 21 July 1588, for example, as English ships engaged the Spanish Armada in the Channel, Drake, in the Revenge, was given orders to lead the pursuit of the Spanish overnight. He was to hang a lantern astern for the rest of the fleet to follow.

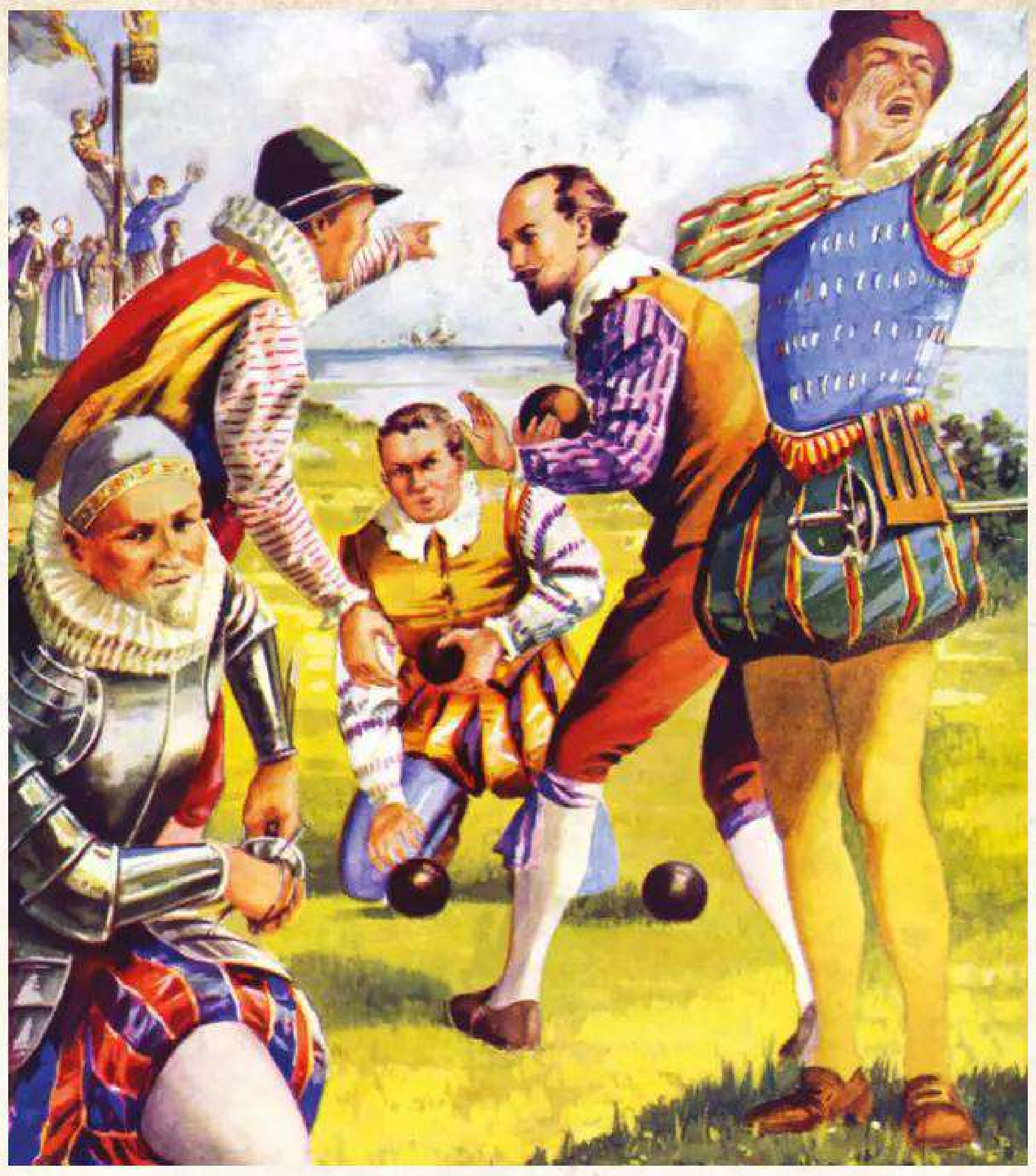
But one Spanish ship, the Nuestra Señora del Rosario, had collided with another. Lagging behind, it became separated from the main fleet. Drake saw an opening. He had the lantern extinguished and, under cover of darkness, slipped away. Sunrise found the Revenge alongside the Rosario. Its captain surrendered without a fight. Did Drake know that the Rosario, one of the Armada's pay ships, had some 50,000 gold ducats on board? Almost certainly not. But he took a third of it for himself anyway.

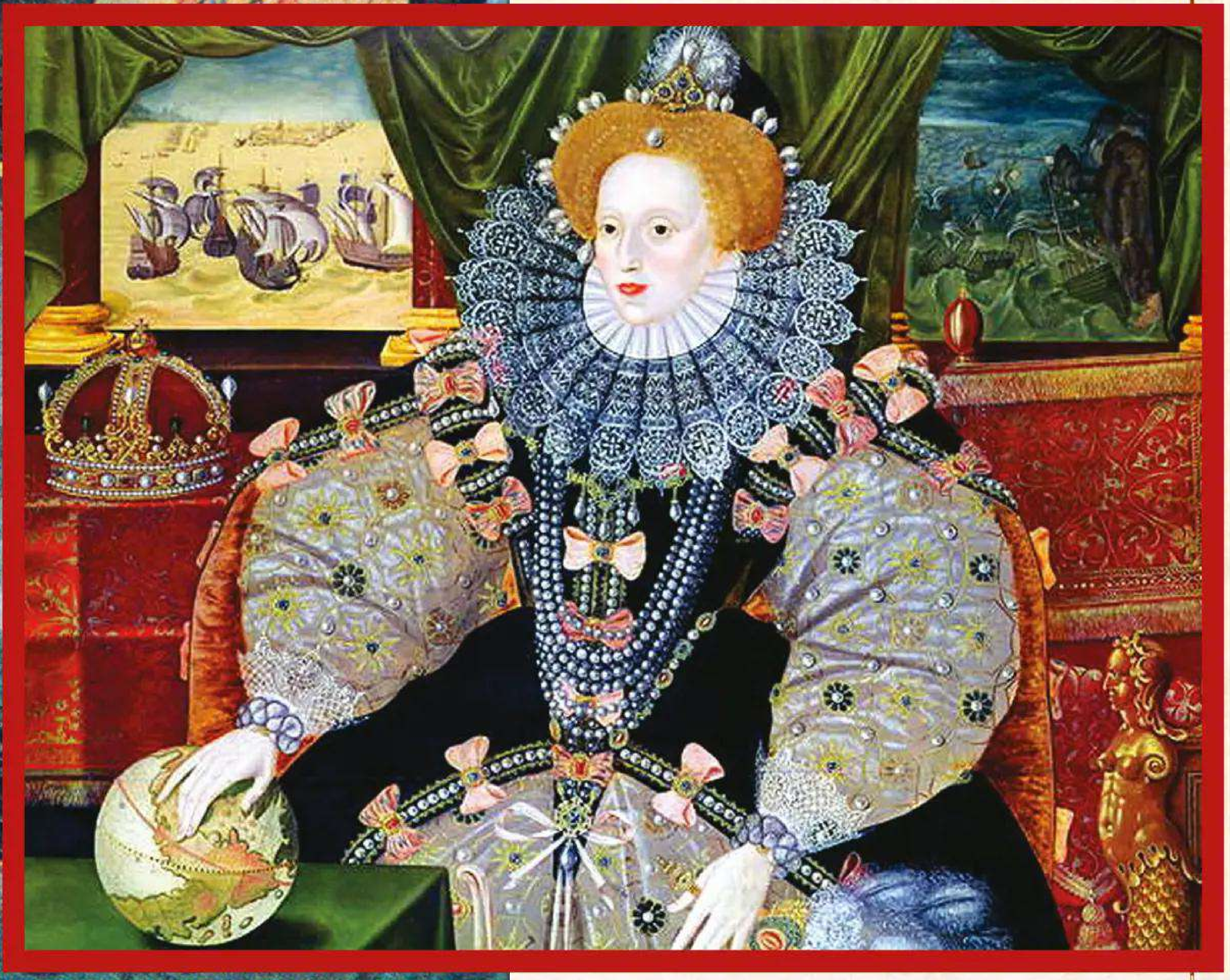
Martin Frobisher, another sometime pirate who served the crown too, was incandescent. "Like a coward, he kept by [the Rosario] all night, because he would have her spoil," he said of Drake when the Armada crisis was past. "He thinketh to cozen us of our shares of 15,000 ducats; but we will have our shares, or I will make him spend the best blood in his belly."

Scanning the horizon

Frobisher had been part of the fleet that took the Madre de Dios; his role had been to patrol the Spanish coast in case the treasure ship got through. But it was another participant, the earl of Cumberland, who nearly bagged an even







bigger prize two years later, when his ships encountered the 2,000-ton Cinco Chagas. It was, the Venetians heard, the richest ship ever to sail from the East Indies.

The English fell upon it near the Azores. After a ferocious gun battle lasting several hours, the bow of the treasure ship caught fire. Some of the Portuguese sailors waved flags of parley, but their captain refused to surrender. The Cinco Chagas burned all day and night. The following morning, the fire finally hit her powder store. The explosion "blew her abroad," Nicholas Downton, an English captain, recalled, "so that most of the ship did swim in parts above the water". Its treasure went to the bottom of the sea.

The reckoning

Looking back on Elizabeth's reign in 1598, Richard Hawkins, John's son, wrote: "That the war with Spain hath been profitable, no man can with reason gainsay. And how many millions we have taken from the Spaniard, is a thing notorious." English ships captured or destroyed well over a thousand Spanish or Portuguese ships between 1585 and 1603. In the first three years of the war alone, they caused some six million ducats of damage. Spanish trade with France and Flanders practically came to a halt.

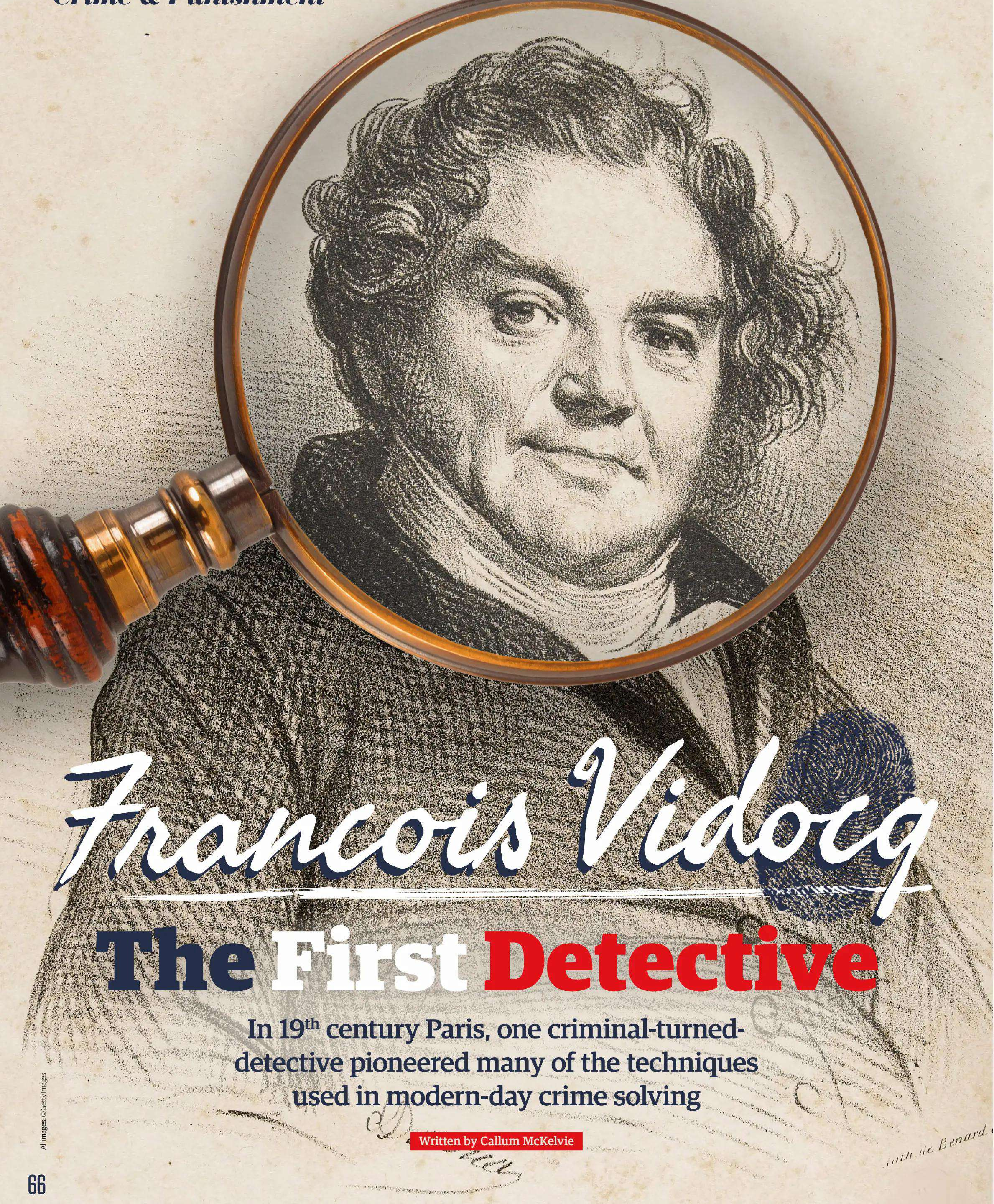
And the scale of all these small private wars is remarkable. In 1563, Philip II was told, there were 400 English ships sailing under letters of reprisal off the French coast. Later in the century, Iberia's Atlantic seaboard teemed with English ships too. There were "never less than two hundred sail… upon their coasts", it was later said. Voyages to Spanish America were necessarily rarer, but still undertaken in some numbers. Drake aside, at least 74 English voyages comprising 183 ships sailed for the West Indies between 1585 and 1603. There were likely many more.

But, like the Cinco Chagas, the very greatest prizes always remained tantalising, just a little out of reach.

TOP-RIGHT Legend has it that Drake finished up his game of bowls before setting out to fight the Armada

BOTTOM-RIGHT The 'Armada Portrait' of Elizabeth I, commissioned to celebrate England's victory over Spain in 1588. The Spanish called her the "queen of pirates"

> "We will have our shares, or I will make him spend the best blood in his belly"



Francois Vidocq

The First Detective

In 19th century Paris, one criminal-turned-detective pioneered many of the techniques used in modern-day crime solving

Written by Callum McKelvie

All images: © Getty Images

From Sherlock Holmes to Miss Marple, we all love stories of the eccentric master detective, solving crimes through clever deduction and superior wit. Yet the world's first modern investigator was himself something of a bohemian, founding a small team of like-minded individuals to take on the criminal underworld of 19th century Paris – Eugene Francois Vidocq. In the years that he worked for the Parisian police he claimed to have been responsible for the arrest of thousands of ne'er-do-wells, and is even credited with establishing the world's first private detective agency.

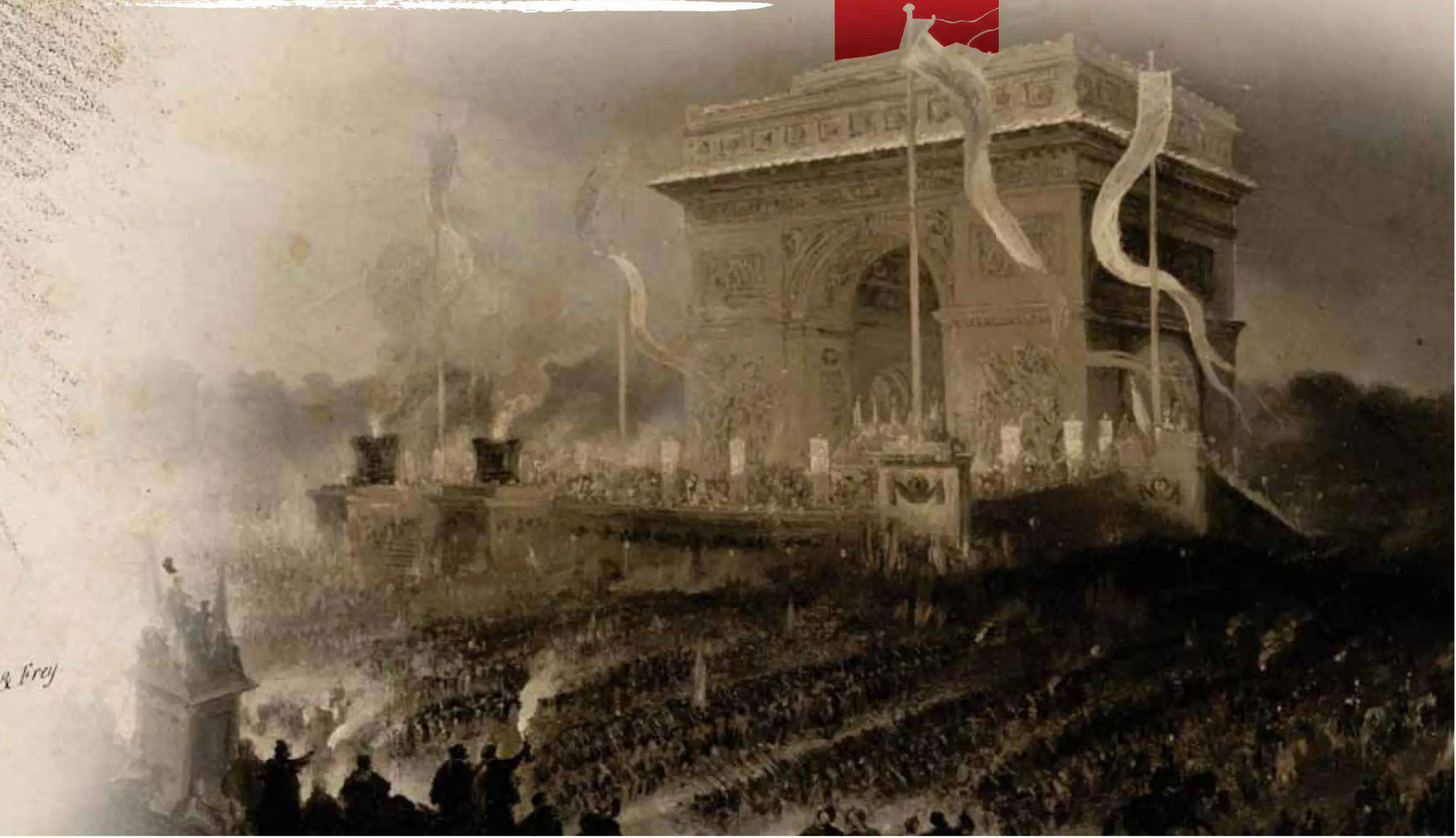
Of his adventures, much has been written and it is clear that he was not opposed to embellishing the facts with heavy doses of fiction too. As such, it is often difficult to separate the man Vidocq from his own self-created myth. Join us as we don our deerstalkers, grab our magnifying glasses and indulge in some investigating of our own to discover the true identity of the first detective?

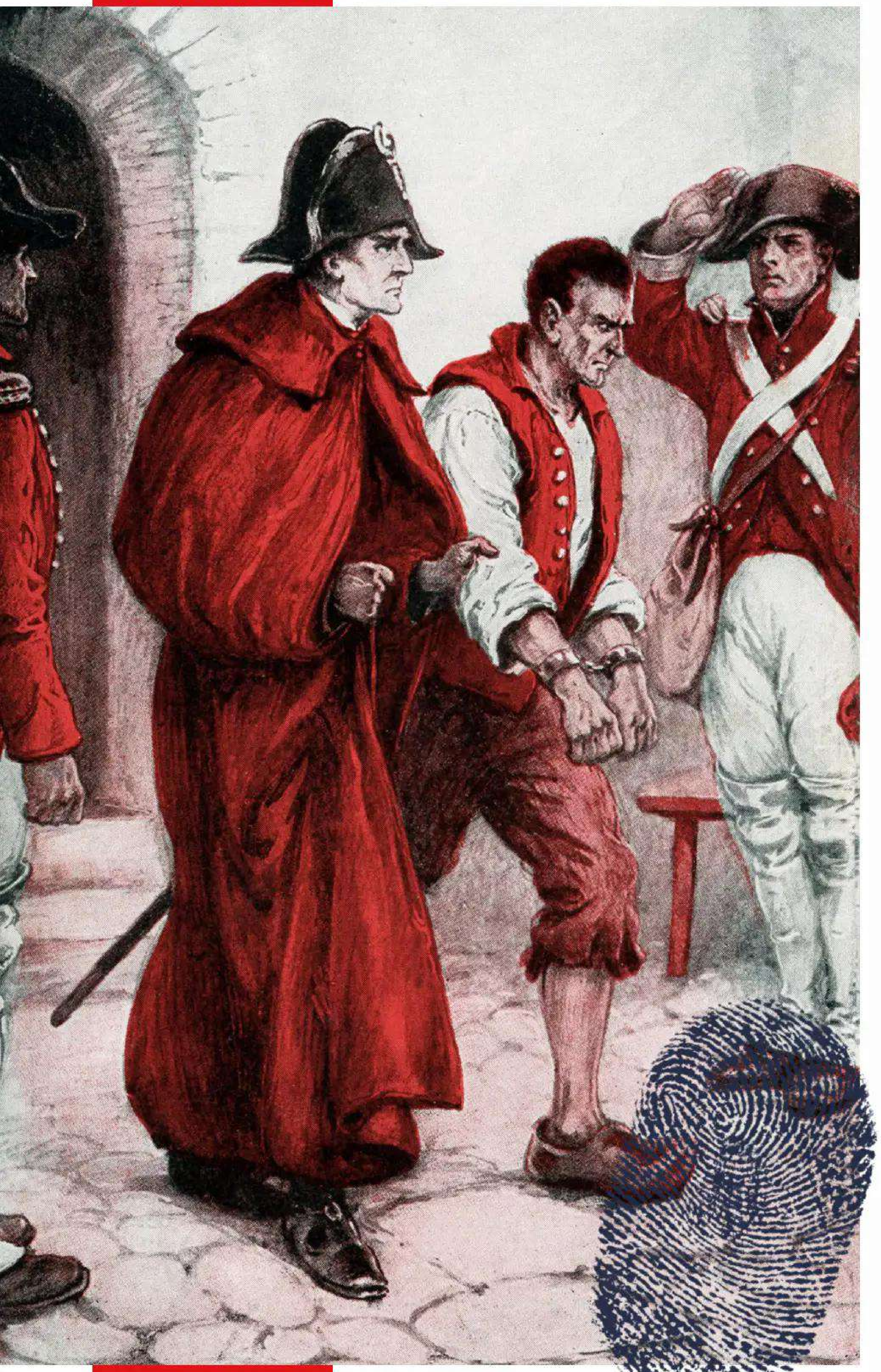
Juvenile Delinquent

Given Vidocq's later impact on the world of criminology, you might be surprised to learn that his younger years were spent on the opposite side of the law. As the *Public Domain Review* eloquently put it, he was "the criminal who became a criminologist." He committed his first crime at the age of 13, stealing his wealthy parents' silver crockery, selling it and within a single day had spent the proceeds. Unbeknown to Vidocq, his father pulled a few strings to try his hand at harsh parenting. He had the boy arrested and forced to serve a ten-day prison sentence. But this did not dissuade the young Eugene Francois. Later, he used a feather coated in glue to lift coins from the cashbox in his parents' bakery. While his plan was successful, the young criminal considered it too much hard work for too little gain and obtained the skills of a blacksmith so that he could instead help himself to the entire cash register. According to Historian James Morton, his earnings were then quickly spent in a local bar.

> "He committed his first crime at the age of 13, stealing his wealthy parents' silver crockery, selling it and within a single day had spent the proceeds"

Fleeing from home, he attempted to join a troupe of travelling performers. But this newfound career was short-lived when he was offered the key role of a 'South Sea cannibal' and ordered to finish his act by consuming a live chicken in front of his audience. Vidocq refused, deciding that perhaps a career in the army would be less traumatic. At the age of 16, he signed up and quickly found a taste for the foil, challenging 15 men to duels and killing two of his opponents. He frequently ▶





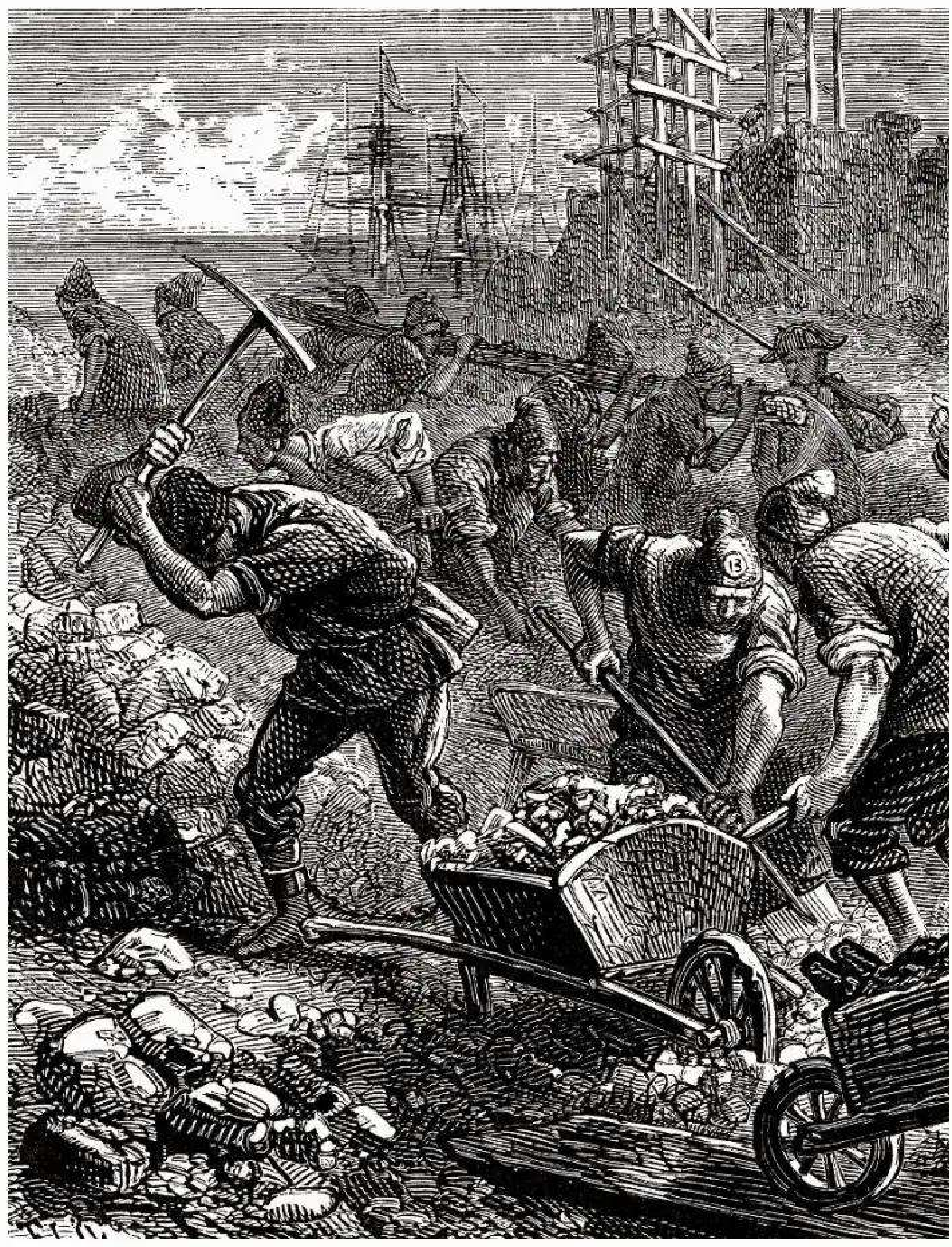
ABOVE A depiction of Vidocq during one of his many prison escapes, disguised in the hat and cloak of a guard

deserted and, at one point, even defected to the Austrians. It was perhaps inevitable that such a reckless loose cannon with little respect for authority would eventually find himself behind bars. At the age of 19, Vidocq served his first prison sentence after he discovered that his mistress had another lover, and had violently beaten him. The next 15 years of his life were spent either behind bars or fleeing from the law.

Jail bird

During his years of incarceration, he served time in the 'galleys', moored ships whose imprisoned occupants spent their days engaged in hard labour. But Vidocq was not a man who was going to simply accept his imprisonment, and he very quickly set about attempting to escape. Vidocq would later write that he had escaped from over 20 prisons and all of France's galleys through such ingenious means as donning a nuns' habit and simply walking out of the prison hospital in disguise. But at some point during Vidocq's cycle of incarceration and living on the run, something strange happened - he had a change of heart. The 34-year-old approached the French constabulary with the offer of becoming a police informer. He was soon sent back to prison, where for nearly two years he reported on the criminal activities of his fellow inmates.

So reliable was the information Vidocq provided to the police, that they quickly arranged for his 'escape' and placed him on the streets. Of his informing, Vidocq would later state: "Not a single day went by that I did not make the most important discoveries; not a single crime went by which was committed or was soon to be committed of which I did not know all the circumstances; I was everywhere, I knew everything and the authorities, when I called upon them to intervene, were never misled by my information."



> "To this end he suggested the creation of a new plainclothes operation, intended to further utilise undercover work to both detect and prevent crimes"

Birth of the Brigade de Sûreté

The authorities quickly realised that Vidocq had something of a knack for undercover work and he was brought onto the force. Expert in Victorian-era crime, Dr Angela Buckley, wrote that Vidocq was shocked at the lack of communication and cooperation

The Literary Detective

Francois Vidocq's flamboyant personality and sensational stories saw him inspire a number of contemporary works of fiction...

Les Misérables

VICTOR HUGO | 1862

Vidocq is thought to have inspired not only Victor Hugo's main hero, Jean Valjean, but also his nemesis - Inspector Javert. A sequence in which Valjean saves a worker at a factory by lifting a heavy cart is inspired by an event that Vidocq details in his memoirs, and states occurred at his paper factory in 1828.

Murders in the Rue Morgue

EDGAR ALLAN POE | 1841

Edgar Allan Poe's classic tale of the macabre sees his detective, C Auguste Dupin (inspired by Vidocq), attempt to solve the mystery of a number of unsolved killings of women plaguing the city of Paris. At the story's climax it is revealed the murderer is not a man at all, but an escaped orangutan.

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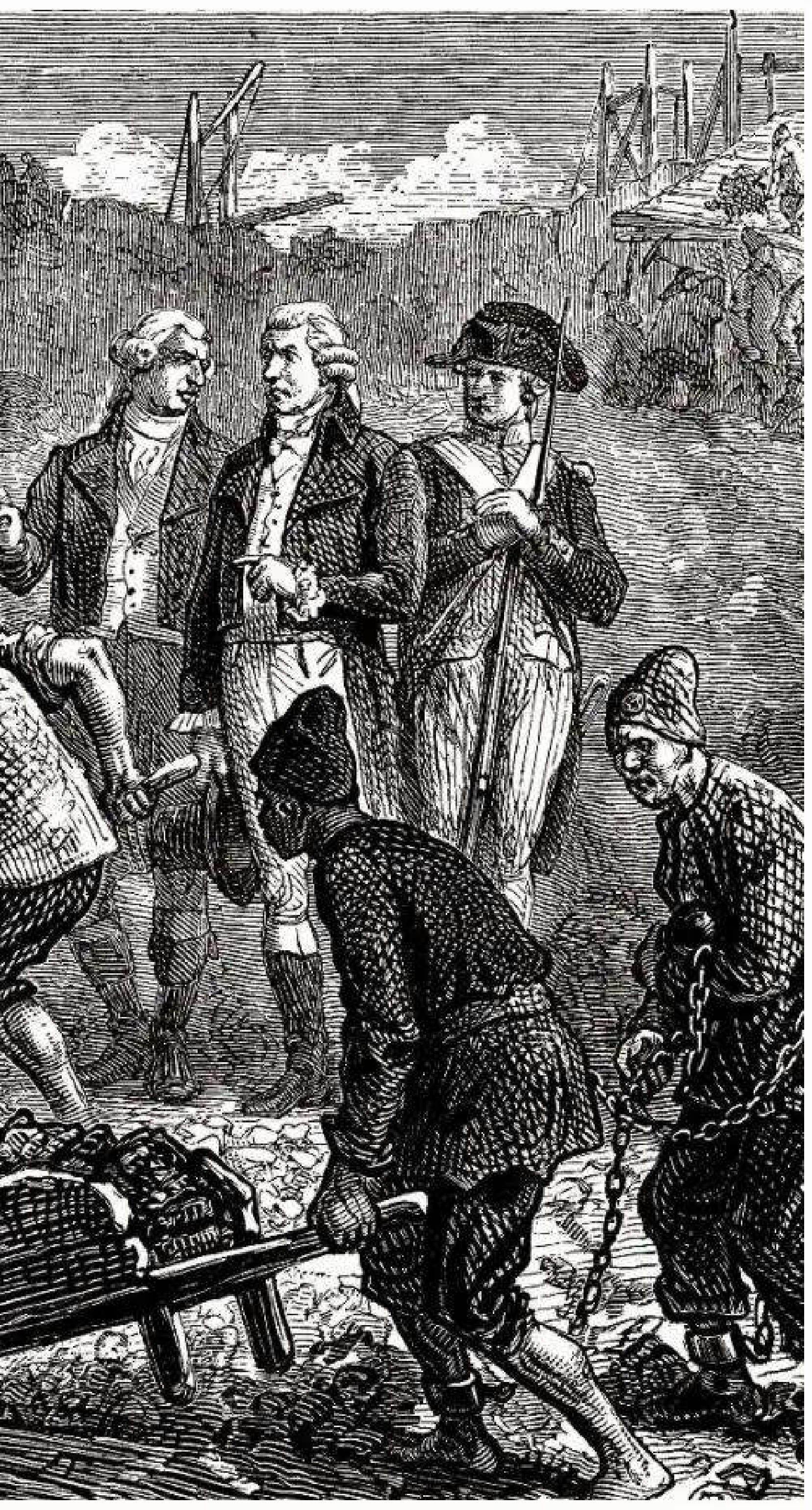
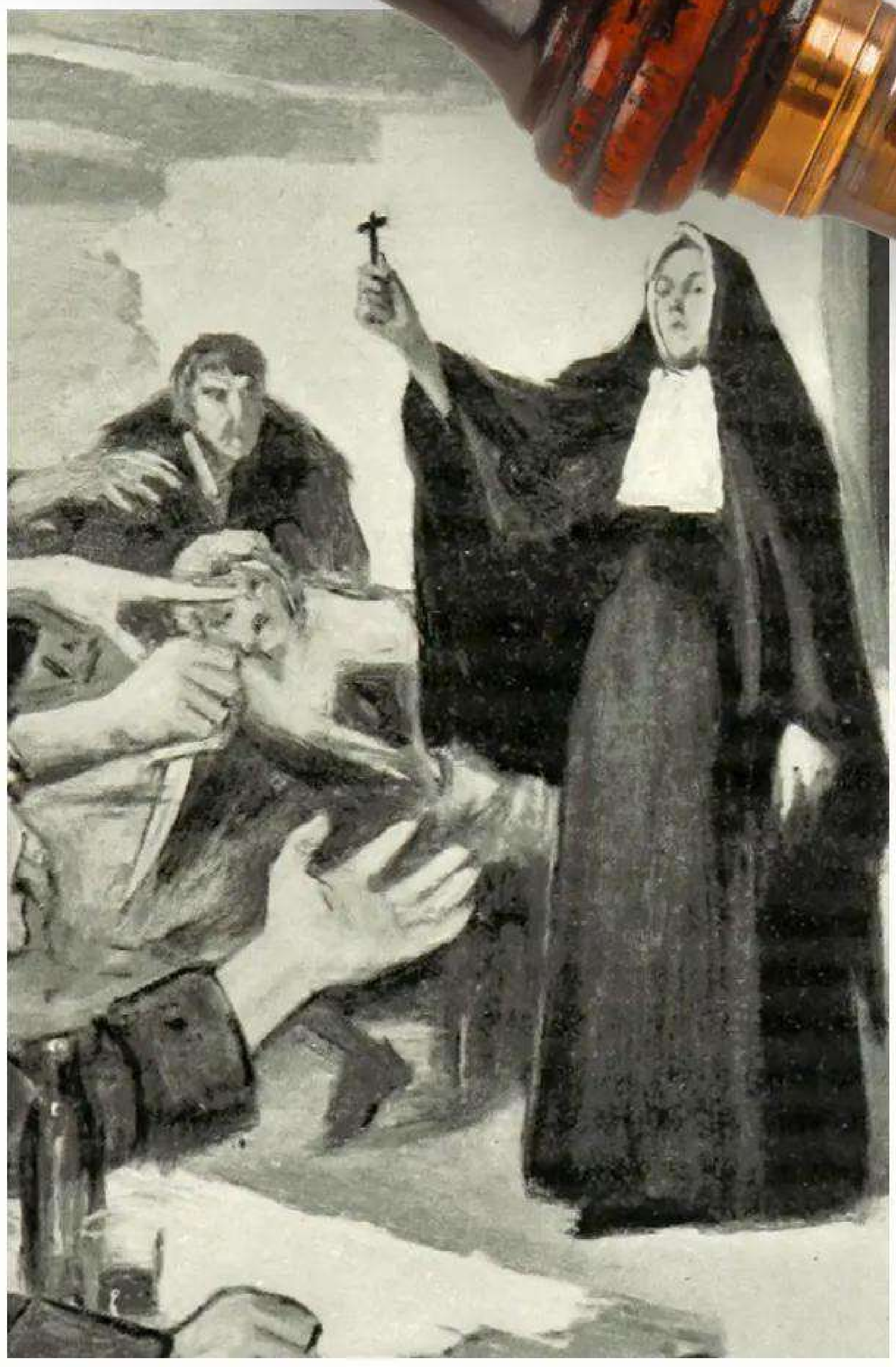
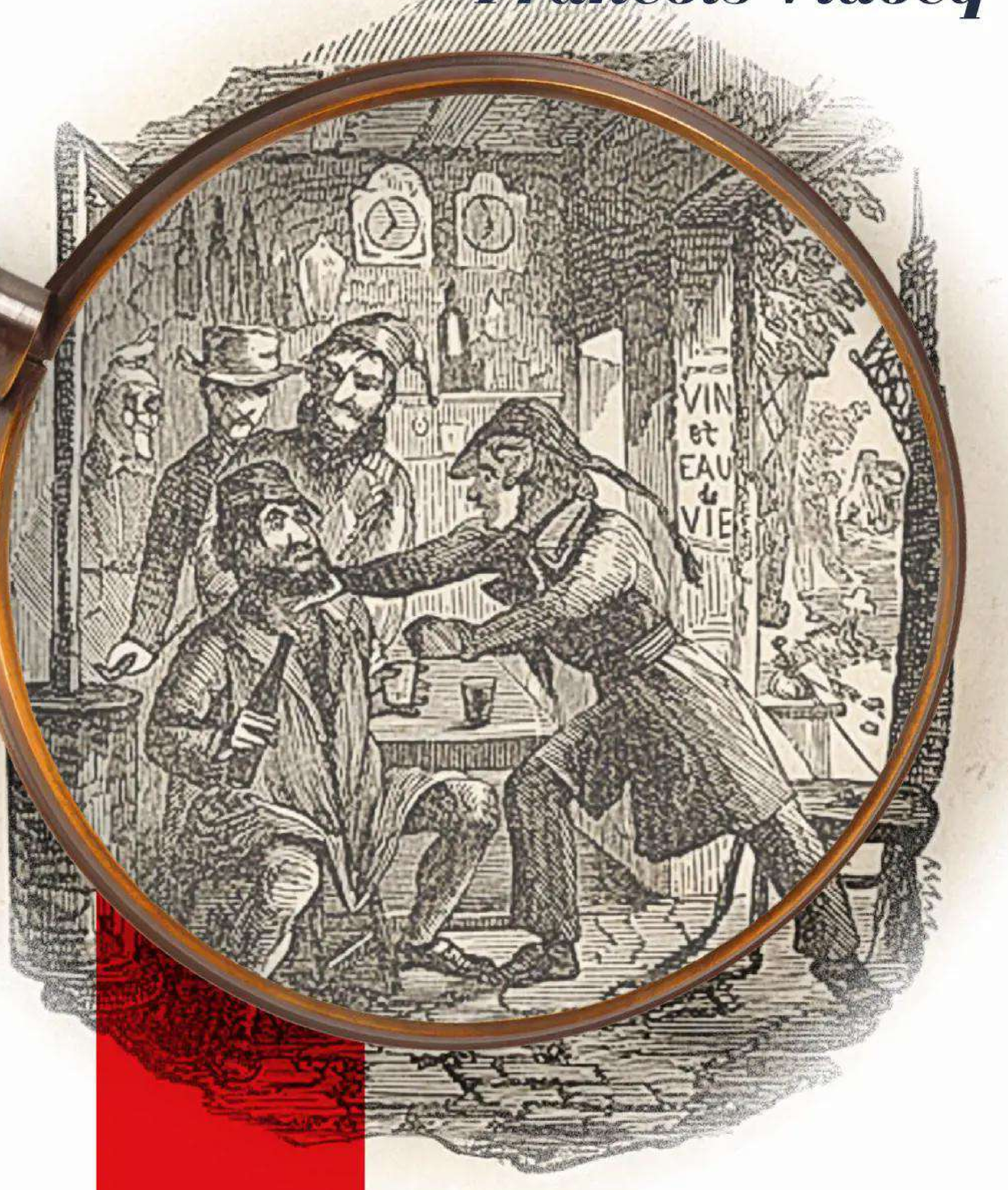






ABOVE-LEFT British prison reformer John Howard inspects the prisoners of the galleys engaged in hard labour

MIDDLE An illustration of the humorous instance when Vidocq claimed to have escaped disguised as a nun

ABOVE Vidocq arrests a thief after finally managing to find and corner him

between the various branches of the police. To this end he suggested the creation of a new plainclothes operation, intended to further utilise undercover work to both detect and prevent crimes. His wish was soon granted and he was made head of the Brigade de Sûreté. The brigade was an exceptionally small outfit, with Vidocq assisted by only four other officers. Over the years it would expand to 12 men, but some sources state that at its height Vidocq may have had 28 undercover operatives (including several women) working for him. All were in their own way, ex-criminals, Vidocq seemingly believing in the notion that 'it takes a thief to catch a thief'.

Vidocq and his team quickly went to work, introducing a wide array of innovations to the world of criminal detection. Perhaps the most surprising of these was the creation of a comprehensive system of records that remarkably had not existed before. According to the *Public Domain Review* this took the form of a card index system of files on thousands of known criminals. During one court case, when the defendant's lawyer argued his client had no previous criminal record, Vidocq produced a lengthy file detailing the man's physical description and previous crimes. Vidocq and his agents worked to create a vast network of known informants, utilising cash bribes where necessary but also offering lighter sentences to already serving criminals. However, John Madinger, in his work *Confidential Informant: Law Enforcement's Most Valuable Tool* states that Vidocq also used other means, pioneering "the hammer", which was essentially "using the threat of imprisonment as a means of motivating cooperation."

But Vidocq's innovations went further, introducing methods that would later become commonplace in the field of forensics. When seeking the culprit of a number of robberies, Vidocq whittled down his suspects to a man named Hotot. Convinced that Hotot was the thief, but unable to produce the evidence necessary to secure a conviction, Vidocq spotted Hotot's muddy boots and was instantly reminded of similar footprints at the scene of the crime. Plying Hotot with wine so ▶

Pere Goriot

HONORÉ DE BALZAC | 1835

As well as inspiring heroes, the earlier aspects of Vidocq's life also influenced authors to create a number of criminal masterminds, among them Honoré de Balzac's Vautrin who, like Vidocq, would eventually find himself working for the Parisian police. Balzac was just one of a number of writers whom Vidocq was said to have befriended.

Great Expectations

CHARLES DICKENS | 1861

Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, alongside works such as *Oliver Twist* and *A Christmas Carol*, remains one of the 19th century author's most famous works. Alongside characters such as Miss Havisham, one of the most colourful characters is the escaped criminal Magwitch – purportedly based on Vidocq's memoirs.

The Mysteries of Paris

EUGENE SUE | 1842-1843

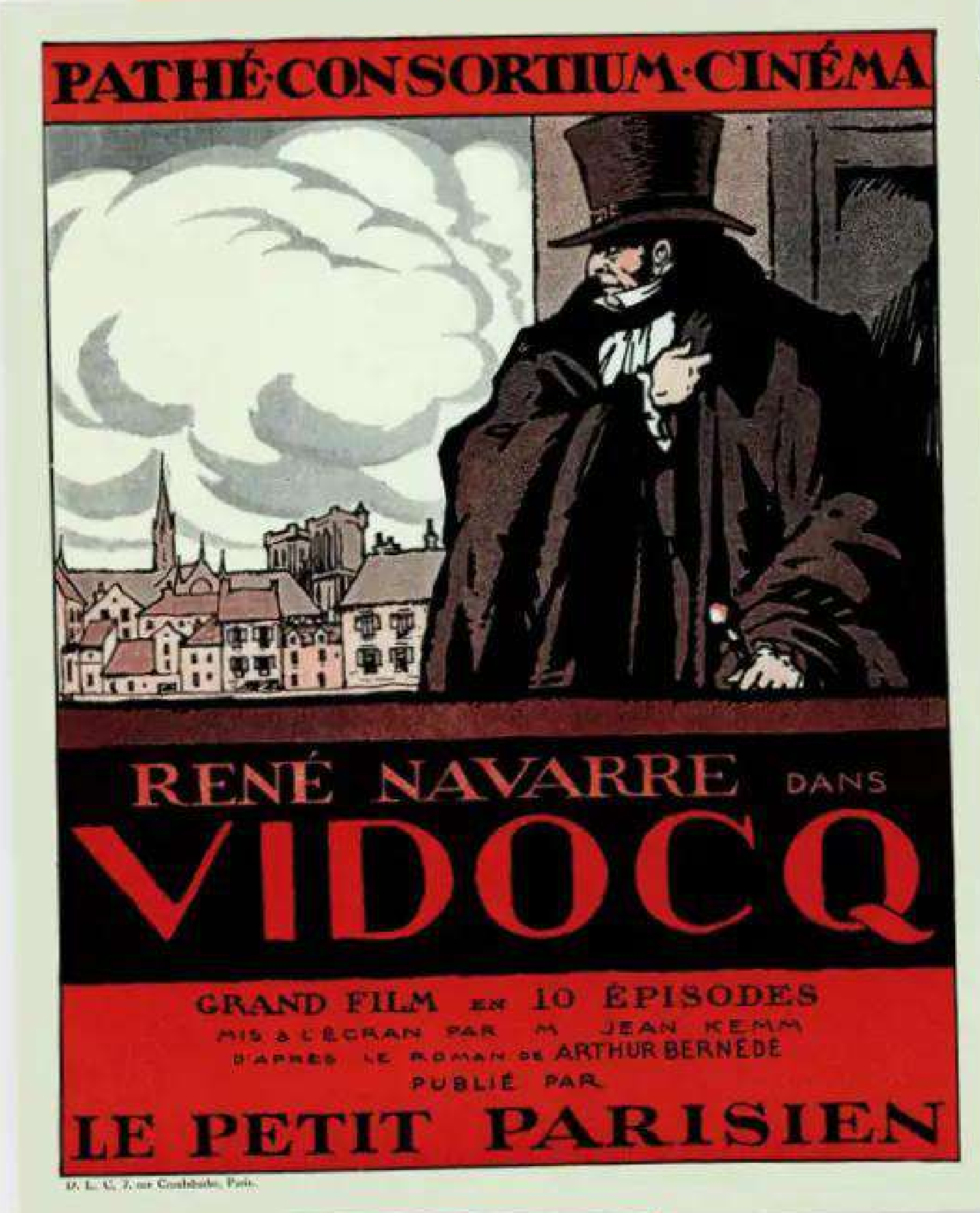
One of the first examples of serialised storytelling in France, Eugene Sue's enthralling tale was slowly woven over the course of 150 tense issues. Its stories of the Parisian underworld may have been influenced by Vidocq's memoirs, but were themselves highly influential, helping to inspire Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* among others.

The Vidocq Society

Far from the streets of Paris, this elite dining society solves cold cases in the name of the first detective

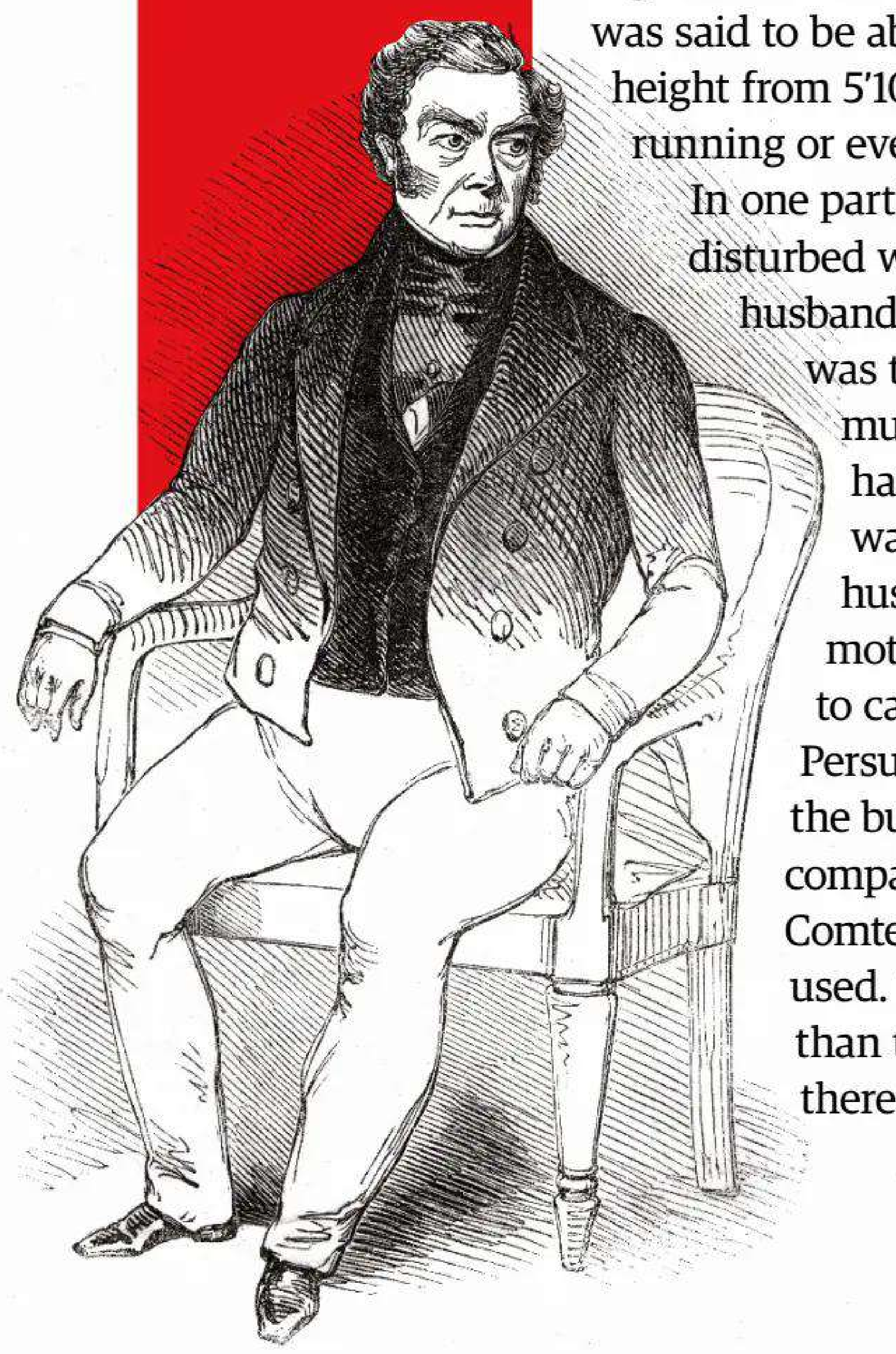
Even centuries after his death, Francois Vidocq's legacy continues to inspire those in the world of criminology. In Philadelphia, there is an exclusive organisation who meet once a month for lunch. In exquisite banqueting halls and over fine food, the members of the Vidocq Society discuss criminal cold cases and try to bring justice to the victims of decades past. This unusual club is the brainchild of three friends, William Fleisher, an ex-cop and FBI agent; Richard Walter, a prison psychologist; and Frank Bender, a forensic sculptor. In 1990 this trio formed an organisation for fellow crime experts and lovers to meet and discuss their subject over haute cuisine.

As time went on, the Society's mission changed. The potential was seen for them to put their skills to use, solving cold cases that had baffled the police of the time. According to *The Guardian*, their assistance may have led to the solving of some 300 crimes, including the discovery that the missing persons case of Scott Dunn was in fact a murder, achieving a conviction for his ex-girlfriend without a body or weapon. The society's members never number more than 82, one for each year of Vidocq's life.


PATHÉ·CONSORTIUM·CINÉMA
RENÉ NAVARRE DANS
VIDOCQ
GRAND FILM EN 10 ÉPISODES
MIS À L'ÉCRAN PAR M. JEAN KEMM
D'APRÈS LE ROMAN DE ARTHUR BERNÈDE
PUBLIÉ PAR
LE PETIT PARISIEN

ABOVE Vidocq's adventures have provided inspiration for many authors and filmmakers, such as this 1923 film directed by Jean Kemm

BELOW A depiction of an older Vidocq from his time in London in 1845



> "Francois Vidocq's imagination and ingenuity continue to inspire crime fighters the world over"

he was not aware of Vidocq's men's actions, he instructed one officer to sneakily obtain one of the boots. The other he ordered to return to the crime scene and pour plaster of paris into the footprint. Later, Vidocq compared the stolen boot with the plaster cast and discovered they were identical. Hotot was convicted in the first recorded use of plaster of paris cast in detection.

In conducting his own undercover work, Vidocq drew on a skill that had previously assisted him in his escapes from Paris's prisons – that of disguises. He once disguised himself as an 'invalid', using dye to darken his hair, strapping his arm tight against his chest and employing a fake arm to give the impression that he only had the use of one. During his incarceration, when he needed to be transferred to the prison hospital, he took tobacco juice in order to give himself a high fever. Perhaps most bizarrely, Vidocq was said to be able to reduce his natural height from 5'10, even when walking, running or even jumping.

In one particular case, Vidocq was disturbed when he heard that the husband of the Comtesse D'Arcy was to be executed for her murder. The Comtesse had been shot, but Vidocq was unconvinced that her husband had either the motive, nor the temperament to carry out such a crime. Persuading a doctor to remove the bullet from her body, he compared it to the gun the Comte was supposed to have used. The bullet was far larger than the barrel of the pistol and there was no way the weapon could have fired it. However, using his charm to coerce his way into the home of the Comtesse's lover, he found not only a gun carrying the same type of projectile but also a number of her possessions.

So successful were these new methods of detection that, if Vidocq himself is to be believed, then the Brigade was responsible for the arrest of thousands of criminals. But there were rumours that the efficiency of the Brigade was due to something far more insidious than mere innovation. In the 1885 edition of *The International Cyclopaedia: A Library of Universal Knowledge*, the author notes that "suspicions became rife that Vidocq was himself the originator of many of the burglaries he showed himself so clever in hunting out, and even contrived to make a good thing of them." Whether such rumours had any validity is of course unknown, but evidently the author of the *International Cyclocpaedia* believed that, "Mr Vidocq being plainly the sort of person in whom any suggested blackguardism is rather more likely than not, it had every inherent possibility."

Going private

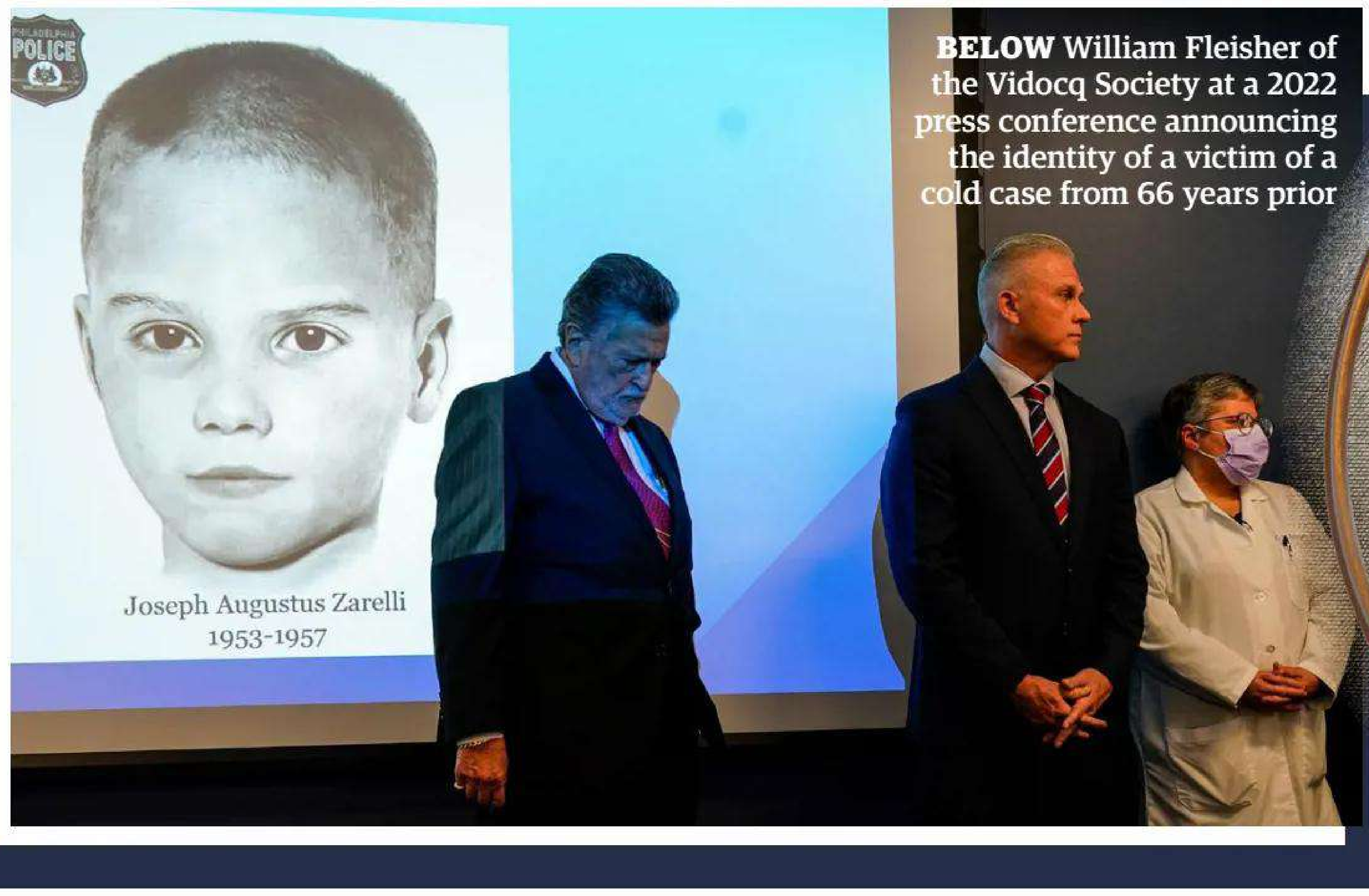
In 1827, Vidocq resigned and occupied his time by publishing four volumes of memoirs that popularised his story and made him something of a celebrity. He then spent the following years running a paper factory, employing former convicts before in 1831 he once more returned to the Brigade de Sûreté. However, within six months he was forced to resign due to a case in which his undercover agents were accused of enticing known criminals to commit illegal acts, in order to secure convictions against them. But perhaps realising that detection work was where his skills lay, Vidocq decided that if he was not welcome among the officers of the law, then he would go into business for himself.

The Bureau de Renseignements (Office of Intelligence) is widely considered to be the world's first modern private detective agency. According to Clive Emsley in his book *Police Detectives in History, 1750-1950*, the Bureau "specialised in investigating the creditworthiness of individuals for businessmen." Clients paid via annual subscription that allowed them to access comprehensive files on Paris's known criminals. The Bureau also investigated more personal cases, which would later become the bread and butter of the private detective, relating from suspected infidelity to tracing missing persons. So successful was Vidocq's venture that the Bureau established offices in the Galerie Vivienne, described by Vidocq's memoir editor Ron Walz as "one of the most fashionable glass-covered arcades in Paris."

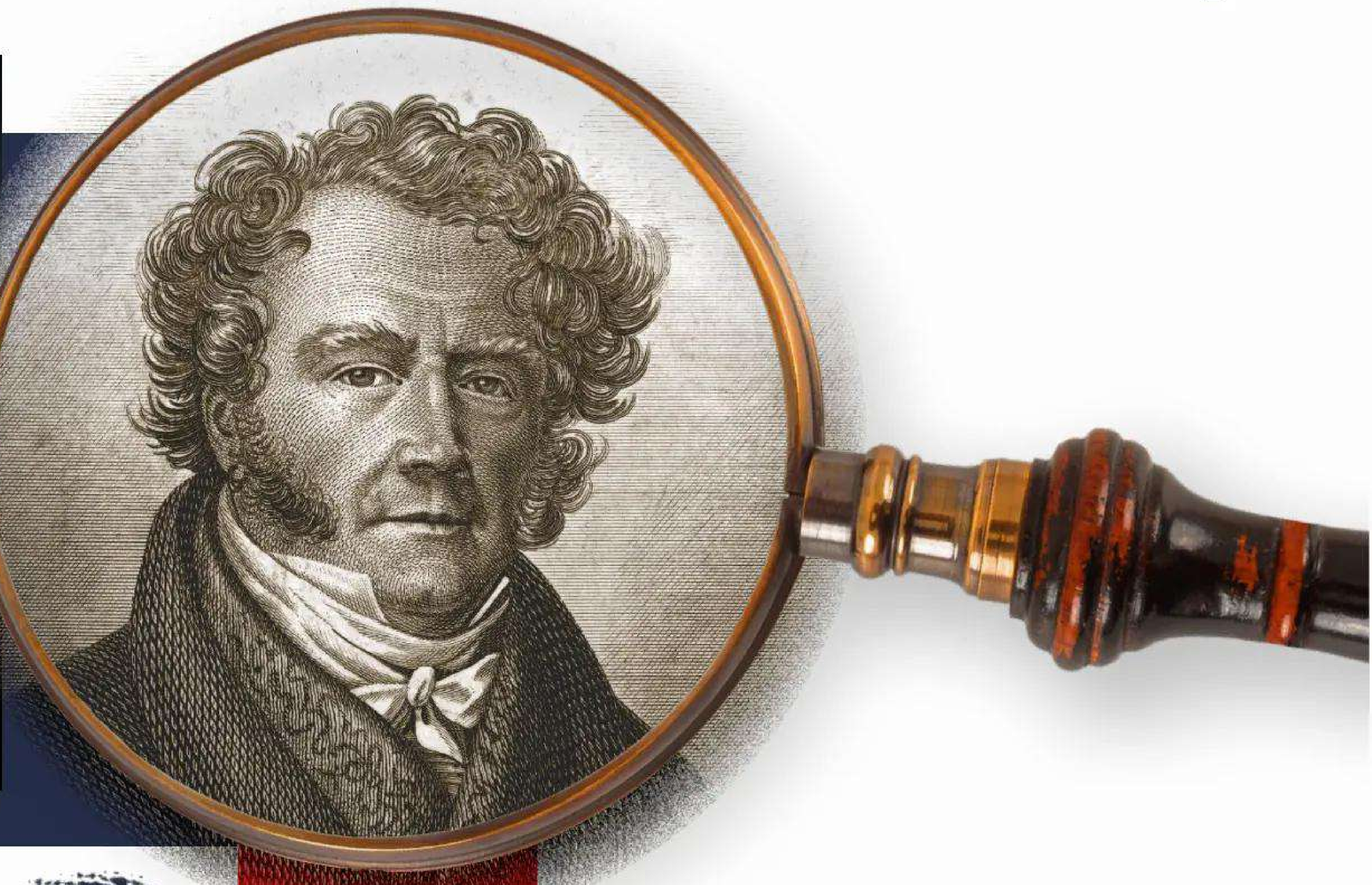
But others resented Vidocq's success and the Parisian police objected to the creation of what was essentially seen as a private police force. Multiple times Vidocq was arrested and he and his Bureau faced trial for a variety of offences, including fraud and illegally detaining persons. Eventually, the Bureau would be forced to close.

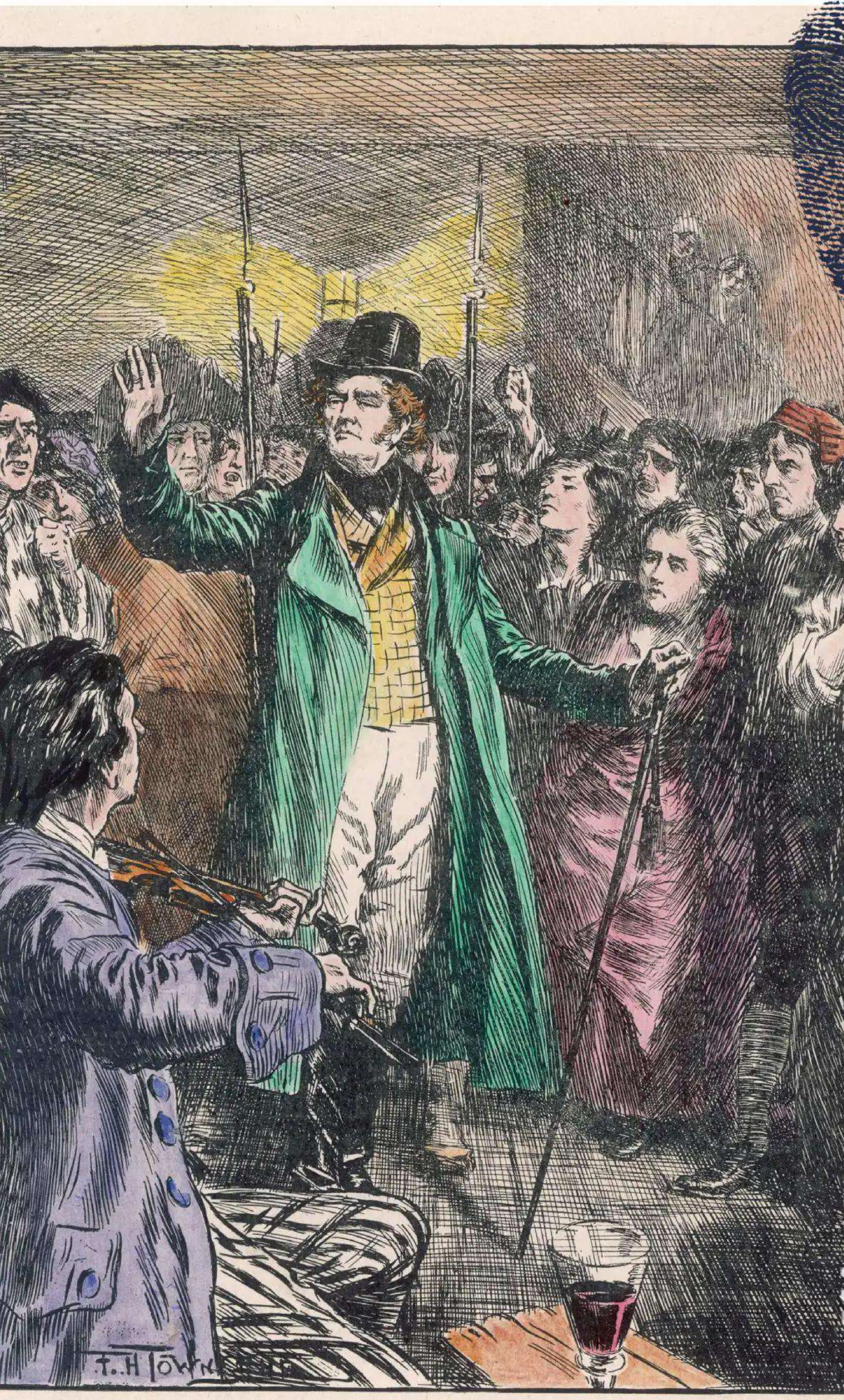
Death of a detective

In 1845, Vidocq travelled to Britain. At age 69, he was investigating the possibility of opening a new branch of his detective agency and gauging interest in another volume of his memoirs. Upon arrival in London, he spent much of his time putting



BELOW William Fleisher of the Vidocq Society at a 2022 press conference announcing the identity of a victim of a cold case from 66 years prior





VIDOCQ STOPS THE MUSIC (p. 352).

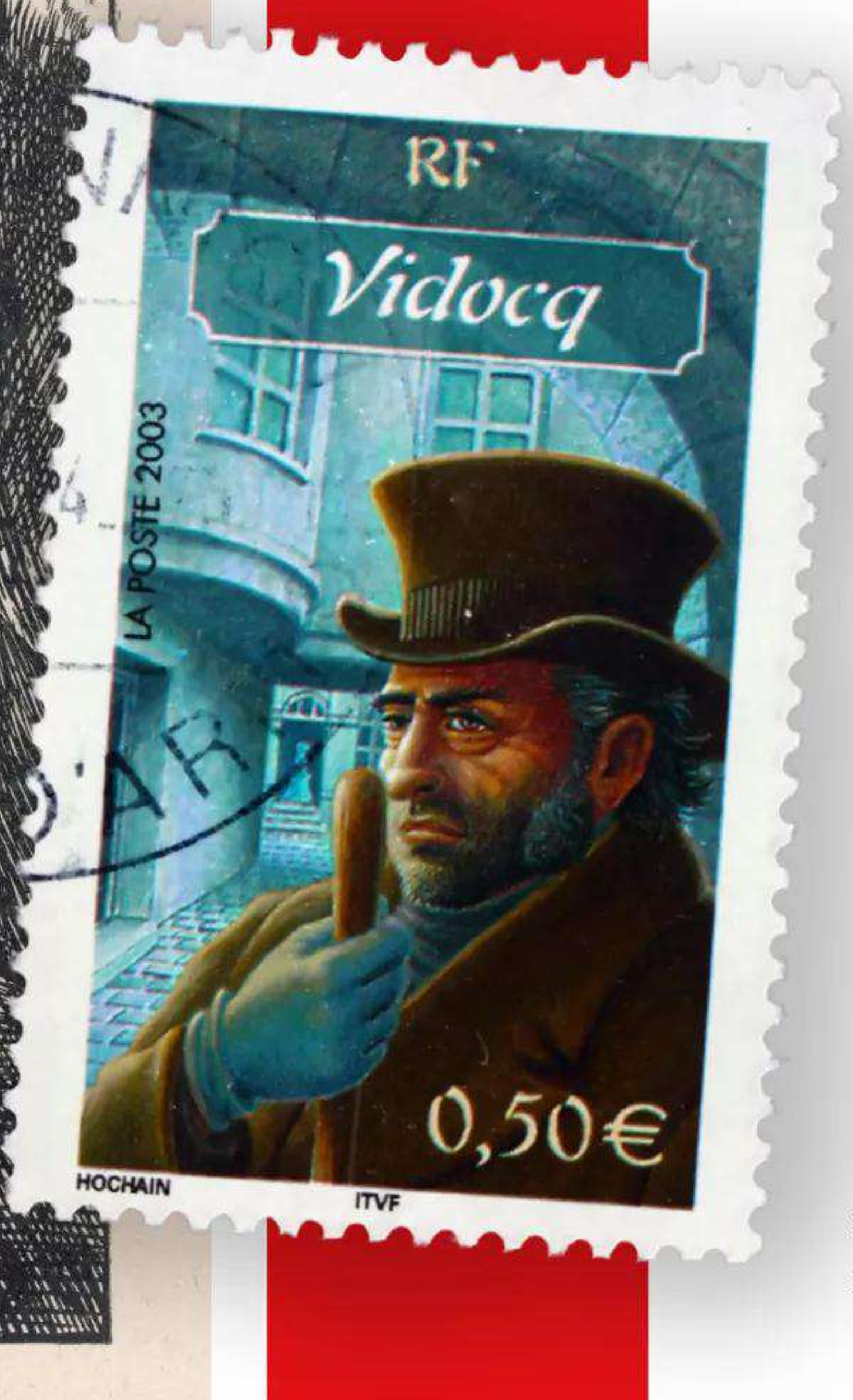
LEFT An illustration showing Vidocq emptying a tavern of criminals

BELOW In recent decades Vidocq's legacy has been honoured on stamps

on an exhibition relating to his days as a detective. Among the items on display were supposed murder weapons, manacles that Vidocq claimed had held him during his imprisonment, and a number of his disguises. According to the *London Review of Books*, Vidocq spent time modelling these disguises for eager patrons, taking libations with interested journalists and trying to sell "several dozen paintings of French battles and four thousand imitation tropical fruits that had recently come into his possession."

The exhibition would prove to be something of a last hurrah for the ageing detective, and in the last 12 years of his life there were few of the adventurous escapades that had defined him. However, according to Morton in his Vidocq biography, *The First Detective*, in 1848 Vidocq returned to London this time to spy on Charles Louis-Bonaparte. Of his mission, he reported that: "There have been difficulties without number but my temerity has been crowned. I knocked and all doors were opened to me." Charles Louis would soon return to France and in 1852 reinstated the imperial monarchy, becoming Napoleon III. Vidocq continued to slowly slide into poverty, his health deteriorated until on 11 May 1857 he died, aged 81.

The legacy of Eugene Francois Vidocq cannot be understated. From pioneering techniques, such as taking plaster casts of footprints, to inspiring modern-day sleuths – and not to mention supposedly even being one of the many models for the most famous detective of all, Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes – Francois Vidocq's imagination and ingenuity continue to inspire crime fighters the world over.



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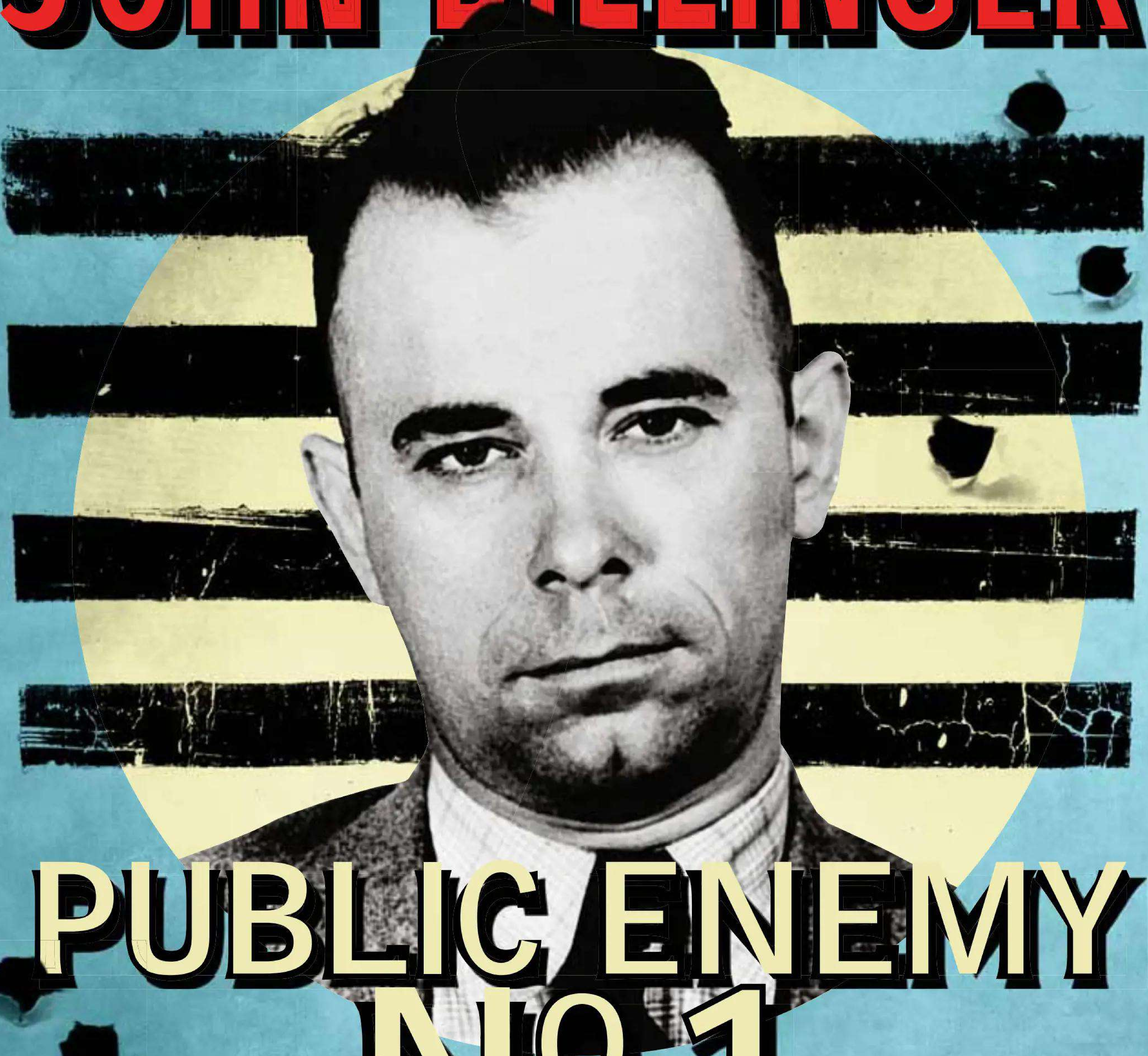
JOHN DILLINGER



PUBLIC ENEMY Nº 1

The criminal who brought government law enforcement into the spotlight, helping to establish the FBI

Written by Christian Cipollini

The Great Depression in America set the stage for a perfect storm. The clash of economic turmoil, larger-than-life figures, and sensationalised media coverage propelled the likes of mobsters and outlaws into the limelight. The frenzy of chaos, hype, and daring escapades turned both criminals and law enforcement agents into media sensations.

The peak of the Midwest's brief 'war on crime' era unfolded between 1933 and 1934. This period witnessed the dramatic rise and fall of notorious figures like John Dillinger, Pretty Boy Floyd, and Baby Face Nelson. Simultaneously, a once obscure group of special agents emerged as a formidable and respected force in the fight against crime.

THE MAKING OF AN OUTLAW

John Herbert Dillinger was born on 22 June 1903 in the Oak Hill section of Indianapolis. His mother died when he was three years old and his father later moved the family to Mooresville Indiana and remarried. As a young man Dillinger enlisted in the Navy, which, according to the FBI, was a decision born out of "a break with his father and trouble with the law (auto theft)." Dillinger deserted and moved back to Mooresville in 1923 where he met Beryl Hovius; they married in 1924.

On 6 September, Dillinger and Ed Singleton robbed a Mooresville grocer named Frank Morgan. During the course of the holdup, Dillinger hit Morgan with a cloth-wrapped piece of iron. Morgan wasn't seriously hurt but when the perpetrators faced a judge, Dillinger had the book thrown at him. The judge sentenced Singleton to 2 to 14 years, but Dillinger got 10 to 20. He began the sentence at Indiana State Reformatory.

In June 1929, Dillinger's wife Beryl filed for divorce. A month later he requested and was granted a transfer to Indiana State Prison. The time spent among the more seasoned and hardened criminal element had a profound effect, serving as defining education in how to be an outlaw.

But then in May 1933, and thanks in part to a petition signed by 184 Mooresville residents, Dillinger was granted parole. He wasted little time in applying the skills learnt in prison and carried out his first bank robbery in June in New Carlisle OH, whereby he netted over $10,000. He would go on to hit a dozen more banks, rake in an estimated $500,000, execute clever escapes, utilise plastic surgery and bulletproof vests, gain a fan following and ultimately fall in a hail of bullets.

FOLK STATUS

Columnist Herb Michelson once wrote of John Dillinger, "Jails couldn't hold him, bullets couldn't scare him, women couldn't resist him."

To be clear, Dillinger was many things, but he wasn't a lone wolf, nor an organised gangster in the purest sense of the phrase. He did run with some of the same people from time to time, but it wasn't a consistent 'gang' per se. It's been said he was very generous, but not quite a 'Robin Hood' figure either.

Crime is a vocation founded on opportunism, adapted to and plied within the environment, and seeks the path of least resistance. For bandits like Dillinger and his contemporaries, the Midwest was conducive to a particular brand of criminality, especially in terms of logistics, culture, geography and the fragmented,

▶

BELOW LEFT Young John Dillinger photographed on his father's farm in Indiana

BELOW A six-year-old Dillinger sitting with his father on the right along with family friends

BOTTOM The Dillinger family home in Mooresville, Indiana

"FOR BANDITS LIKE DILLINGER, THE MIDWEST WAS CONDUCIVE TO A PARTICULAR BRAND OF CRIMINALITY"

All images: © Getty Images

often under-equipped law enforcement agencies. These outlaws often acquired bigger guns, faster cars and even, to some degree, the support of civilians.

This was the Great Depression after all and in the wake of the 1929 stock market crash, people squarely blamed the financial sector. So, when banks were getting robbed – especially by a charismatic Midwestern bad boy – a growing segment of the public viewed it with ambivalence or as justified.

After a series of robberies, Dillinger was arrested in Dayton, Ohio, and was taken to Allen County Jail in Lima, Ohio in September 1933. A few days later, ten men managed to escape from Indiana State Prison with guns previously smuggled in by Dillinger. Then on 12 October, several of those men broke Dillinger out of jail in Lima, Ohio, one of whom, Harry Pierpont, killed Sheriff Jesse Sarber during the escape.

Dillinger continued evading the law and met Evelyn 'Billie' Frechette that November in Chicago. Although they became lovers, it's been said she didn't directly get involved in criminal exploits, beyond providing clothing, money or transportation when necessary. Still, the law was gunning for anyone and everyone associated with Dillinger.

BLUNDERS & REBRANDING

As history shows, John Dillinger proved to be a defining factor in America's crime-fighting evolution. His notoriety drew folk hero status, and the ire of an embarrassed legal system, which helped force the hand of the Federal government to pass new laws and form a centralised enforcement unit.

Enter J Edgar Hoover. In 1924, Hoover assumed the role of acting chief of the Bureau of Investigation (BOI). Subsequently, he ascended to the position of its leader, which he held until his demise in 1972. During its initial years however, the bureau possessed restricted capabilities and garnered minimal recognition beyond the confines of the greater Washington DC region.

Bryan Burrough, the author of the 2004 publication *Public Enemies*, drew a correlation between Hoover's ascent to fame and Dillinger's criminal activities in the documentary *The True Story of John Dillinger*. Burrough asserts that Dillinger's narrative was closely intertwined with Hoover's narrative, as Hoover and his bureau's obscurity were transformed during Dillinger's crime spree. Burrough notes, "18 months later, Hoover is a household name."

But Hoover's bureau had little power to intervene in the Midwest mayhem, at least for the moment. The shift began when Dillinger escaped from Lake County Jail

> "THE TIME SPENT AMONG THE MORE SEASONED AND HARDENED CRIMINAL ELEMENT HAD A PROFOUND EFFECT"

MOST WANTED

Five more famous fugitives from American history

THOMAS JAMES HOLDEN

Holden became the first person to be placed on the FBI's 'Ten Most Wanted Fugitives' on 14 March 1950. Holden was suspected of the murder of his wife and two brothers after a drunken argument in Chicago. He was apprehended in June 1951 following a tip in Beaverton, Oregon.

RUTH EISEMANN-SCHIER

The first woman to make the FBI's top ten most wanted list in 1968, having kidnapped Barbara Jane Mackle, daughter of a millionaire, and buried her in a box for 83 hours. She and her partner had demanded a ransom of $500,000. She was apprehended by the FBI in Norman, Oklahoma in March 1969.

VICTOR MANUEL GERENA

At large for around 40 years, Gerena was accused of armed robbery in 1983, taking $7 million. Working as a Wells Fargo security guard, he also allegedly took two fellow guards hostage in the armoured car robbery. The FBI is still offering a reward for information leading to his capture.

TED BUNDY

This infamous serial killer was on the most wanted list twice, first for rape and murders starting in 1974 and then again for six days when he escaped from the courthouse where he was standing trial in 1977. He ultimately confessed to 28 murders, although he is suspected to have perpetrated more.

OSAMA BIN LADEN

The head of the al Qaeda terrorist organisation was first added to the FBI's most wanted list after the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York and 18 Americans killed in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993. He was ultimately killed in a special operations raid of his compound in Pakistan in 2011.

in Crown Point Indiana, using a wooden gun and stealing the sheriff's car. Driving the car across state lines opened Pandora's box; now the Feds could take the reins of pursuit, but not without some epic fails.

CHICAGO CINEMA SHOWDOWN

By the spring of 1934, the pursuit of Dillinger was marred by various errors and mishaps by law enforcement, such as the accidental shooting of two innocent individuals at the Little Bohemia Inn in April (Dillinger, of course, slipped away). Frechette, however, was arrested in April on charges of harbouring a criminal. She received a two-year sentence. Dillinger seriously contemplated breaking her out, but was eventually talked out of the idea. After Frechette's imprisonment Dillinger took up with other women, but maintained some written correspondence with Frechette, who also insisted he not risk attempting a breakout.

President Roosevelt threw his weight into the mix, and urged Congress to pass new anti-crime legislation, resulting in the criminalisation of fleeing across state lines and granting Hoover's agents increased authority. "Shoot him first and ask questions, if necessary, later," wrote INS reporter Robert S Thornburgh in an article on 24 April. "That's what the Department of Justice says about America's public enemy no. 1."

Anna Sage, a friend of Dillinger's new girlfriend Polly Hamilton, was a brothel owner entangled in her own legal issues when she entered the story. In a bid to evade deportation and legal repercussions, Sage decided to act as an informant. This led to a meeting with agent Melvin Purvis, ultimately sealing Dillinger's fate that summer. Hamilton, Sage and Dillinger were going to catch a gangster flick at a theatre in Chicago.

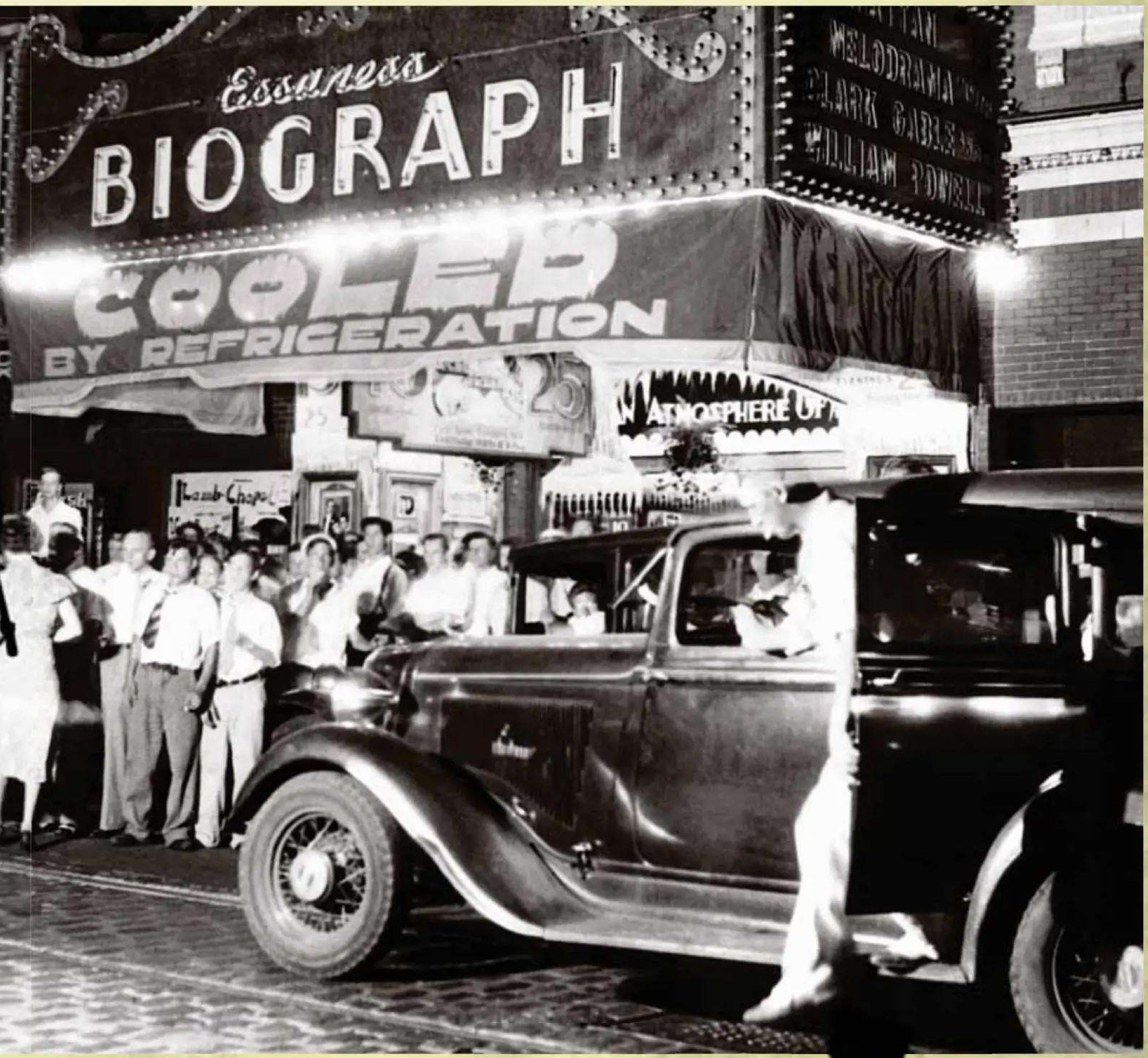
A memorandum dated 3 October 1935 summarised the FBI's version of Dillinger's last stand – "About 10:50 o'clock on the night of July 22, 1934, Dillinger, accompanied by two women companions, was observed emerging from the Biograph Theater. They walked south on Lincoln Avenue from the theatre. Special Agent in Charge M. Purvis gave the pre-arranged signal of lighting a cigar. Agents immediately began to close in slowly towards Dillinger from all sides. Dillinger apparently became apprehensive. He glanced over his shoulder at [the] Agents and started to run, grabbing for his gun simultaneously. As Dillinger grabbed for his gun, five shots were fired by three Agents, one Agent firing three shots and two Agents firing one shot each. Dillinger fell face downward near an alley. A 380 calibre automatic pistol was in his hand when he fell. No shots were fired from Dillinger's pistol. An extra clip for his pistol was found in his pocket."

The authorities placed both Sage (who was being identified as 'the lady in red') ▶

TOP LEFT Some of many mugshots of the notorious Dillinger; a collection of weapons used by John Dillinger during the course of his criminal career

BELOW The theatre where Federal agents caught and killed Dillinger on 22 July 1934

BELOW LEFT Dillinger posing with a Colt .38 and a submachine gun



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"HIS NOTORIETY DREW FOLK HERO STATUS, AND THE IRE OF AN EMBARRASSED LEGAL SYSTEM"

ABOVE Dillinger handcuffed to Deputy Chief Carroll Holby at his Indiana trial in 1934

BELOW J Edgar Hoover with Chicago Bureau Chief, Melvin Purvis after the slaying of Dillinger

RIGHT The body of Dillinger is brought out to a large crowd outside a Chicago funeral home

and Polly Hamilton in witness protection, but Sage's true identity was exposed to the media shortly thereafter. Despite popular belief, Sage wasn't actually wearing a red outfit, but instead an orange skirt paired with a white top. Unfortunately, her efforts to avoid deportation also proved to be in vain as she was eventually sent back to Romania by the government in 1936.

After Dillinger's downfall, the G-men targeted and killed another Midwestern outlaw in October, Pretty Boy Floyd, who was suspected of being a key figure in the 1933 Kansas City Massacre. Next, Dillinger's erstwhile pal (and often described as a psychopath) Baby Face Nelson succumbed to wounds during a gunfight with agents on 27 November in Barrington, Illinois. "Dillinger would only shoot when he was cornered," J Edgar Hoover later said, "but Nelson will shoot without any provocation."

THE STORY ISN'T QUITE OVER YET

Less than a year after Dillinger's death, J Edgar Hoover's department got a new permanent name – Federal Bureau of Investigation – and he went on to become one of the most powerful, and contentious, figures in American law enforcement and political realms. After release from prison, Dillinger's former lover Evelyn Frechette toured with members of Dillinger's family for a few years, giving interviews and speaking engagements. She died in 1969.

Like so many of history's legends, the posthumous legacy of John Dillinger conspiracies and mysteries gained traction and continue to this day. Was Dillinger really dead? Where was all the cash hidden?

In 2019 a faction of Dillinger family members, in league with the History Channel, sought to have the dead outlaw's remains exhumed in hopes of answering the burning question – is it him? However, after initially being granted the permits, the project was challenged. Family members then filed a lawsuit. The History Channel then pulled entirely out of the project the following month. As of January 2020, the lawsuit was withdrawn.

Even more recently, another documentary series went on the search for Dillinger's money stash. Hosted by Josh Gates, Discovery Channel series *Expedition Unknown* didn't find any cash but when the episode "Dillinger's Lost Loot" aired in July 2021, it showcased the triumphant return of a fully restored stolen police car. The vehicle had been thought long lost but was returned in pristine form to the Crown Point police in April 2021. "The 1933 Ford Police V-8 stolen by John Dillinger is back at the same jail from which he stole it 87 years ago," NPR announced in April. "An enthusiast tracked down the car in Maine and it was restored to its original form." In August 2023, the car was sold in auction for $150,000.

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HOW KEY WWII MOMENTS COULD HAVE CHANGED THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT

World War II was the biggest and bloodiest conflict the world had ever seen. We all know how things turned out in the end, but have you ever stopped to think about what might have been if key battles, decisions or events had taken a different course? Discover the answers inside.

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WAR STORIES

THE RISE OF NAPOLEON

How the French Republic was seduced by its charismatic and calculating war-hero

Written by William Doyle

Illustration by: Joe Cummings

EXPERT BIO

© William Doyle

PROFESSOR WILLIAM DOYLE

Professor William Doyle is senior research fellow in Historical Studies and emeritus professor of History at the University of Bristol. He specialises in 18th-century France with several books exploring the causes, events and consequences of the French Revolution.

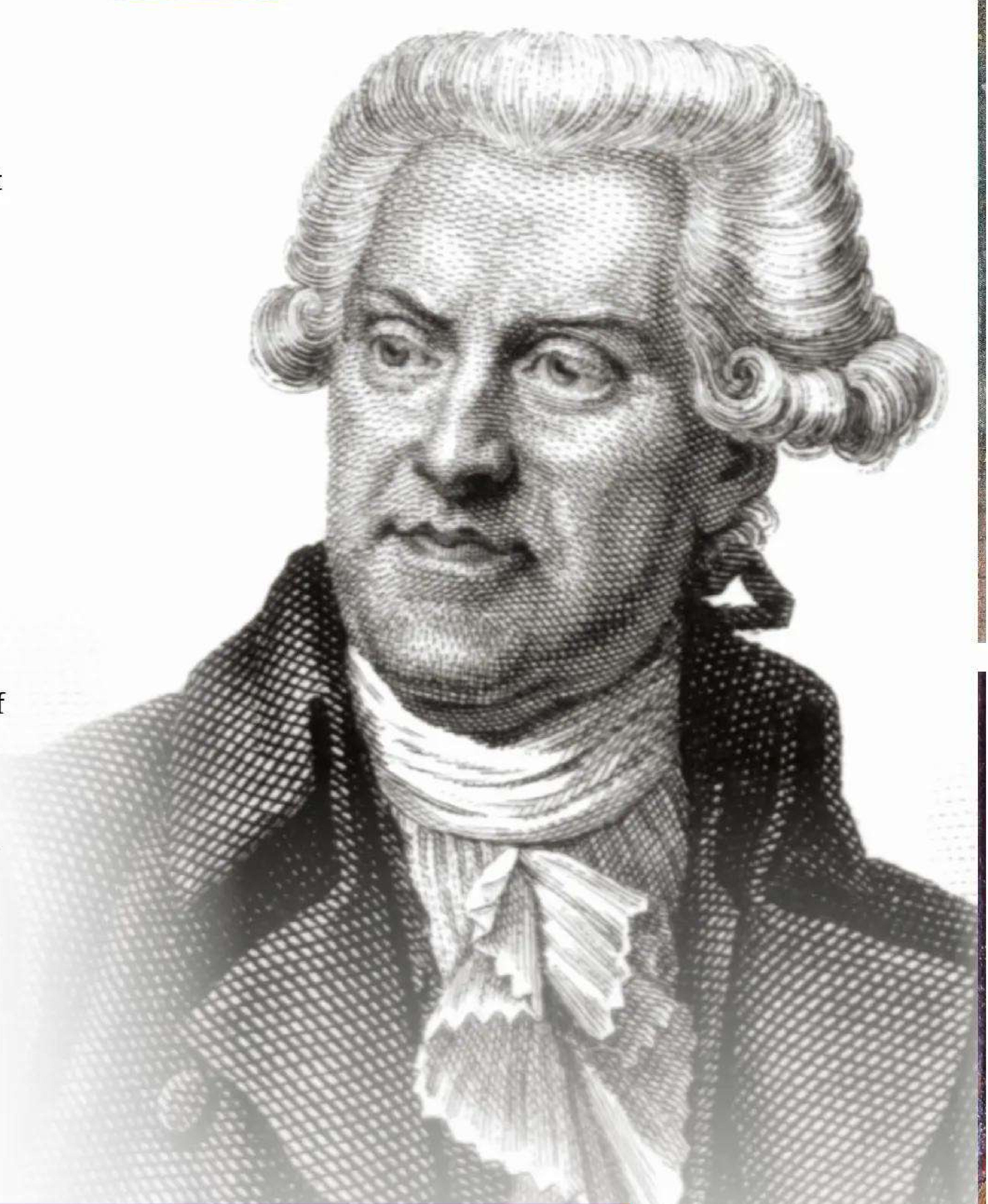
“Is he lucky?” Napoleon would often ask when appointing a new general. He knew from his own life and career what that meant. He believed there was a lucky star guiding his destiny, and it shone on him from the moment of his birth. If he had been born two years earlier, he would have been Genoese, not French, since his native Corsica was only ceded to France in 1768. And he was lucky to be born a nobleman, because this status qualified him for admission into officer training schools in mainland France.

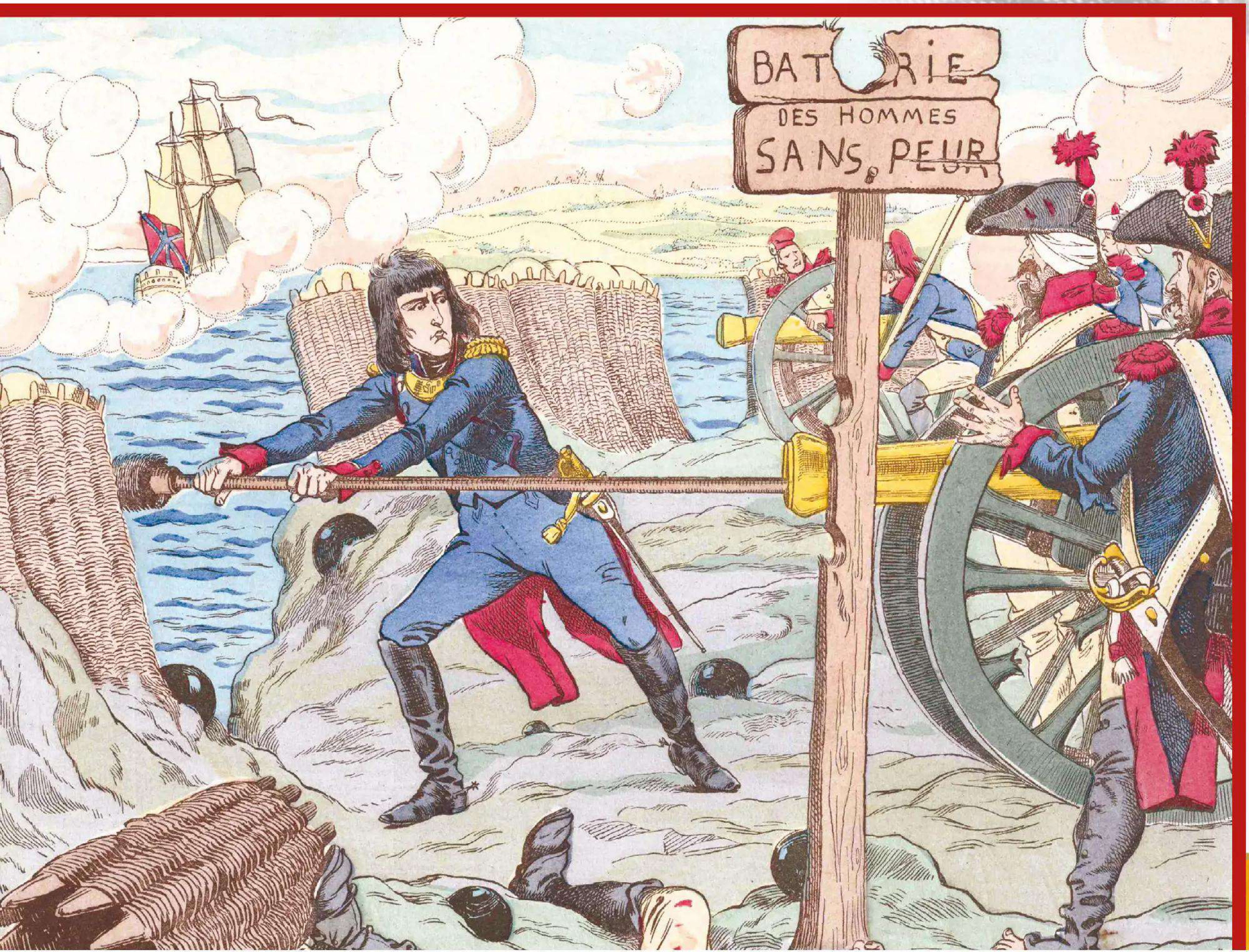
Yet he knew that however well he did, he could never hope to rise high in the royal army, since the most prestigious ranks were reserved for courtiers. In any case, mocked for his remote origins and Italian name and accent, he was not a happy cadet. He had plenty of ambition, but his youthful dream was to return to Corsica and lead a movement to liberate the island from French rule. He spent much of his first years as a commissioned officer back home on leave, seeking glorious native opportunities. But it was the French Revolution that provided them, on a much grander scale.

REVOLUTIONARY OPPORTUNITIES

Though not a political activist in 1789, Napoleon was sympathetic to the reformist aims of the Revolution, and at first he welcomed the return from exile of the former leader of Corsican resistance to French annexation, Pasquale Paoli. But Paoli was soon at loggerheads with the revolutionary regime that had initially allowed him back, and he was suspicious of the extensive and influential Bonaparte family. Months of increasingly bitter rivalry culminated in June 1793 in the whole clan being hounded out of the island. They took refuge in France, and from now on Napoleon abandoned his Corsican ambitions and committed himself wholeheartedly to the service of the revolutionary republic.

Luck once more favoured him. He was still a commissioned officer, but the officer corps as a whole had been decimated by the emigration of thousands of noblemen when the revolutionaries quarrelled with the king, and then overthrew the monarchy. There were thus unexpected opportunities for officers who remained with the colours, especially since the new republic was soon at war with much of



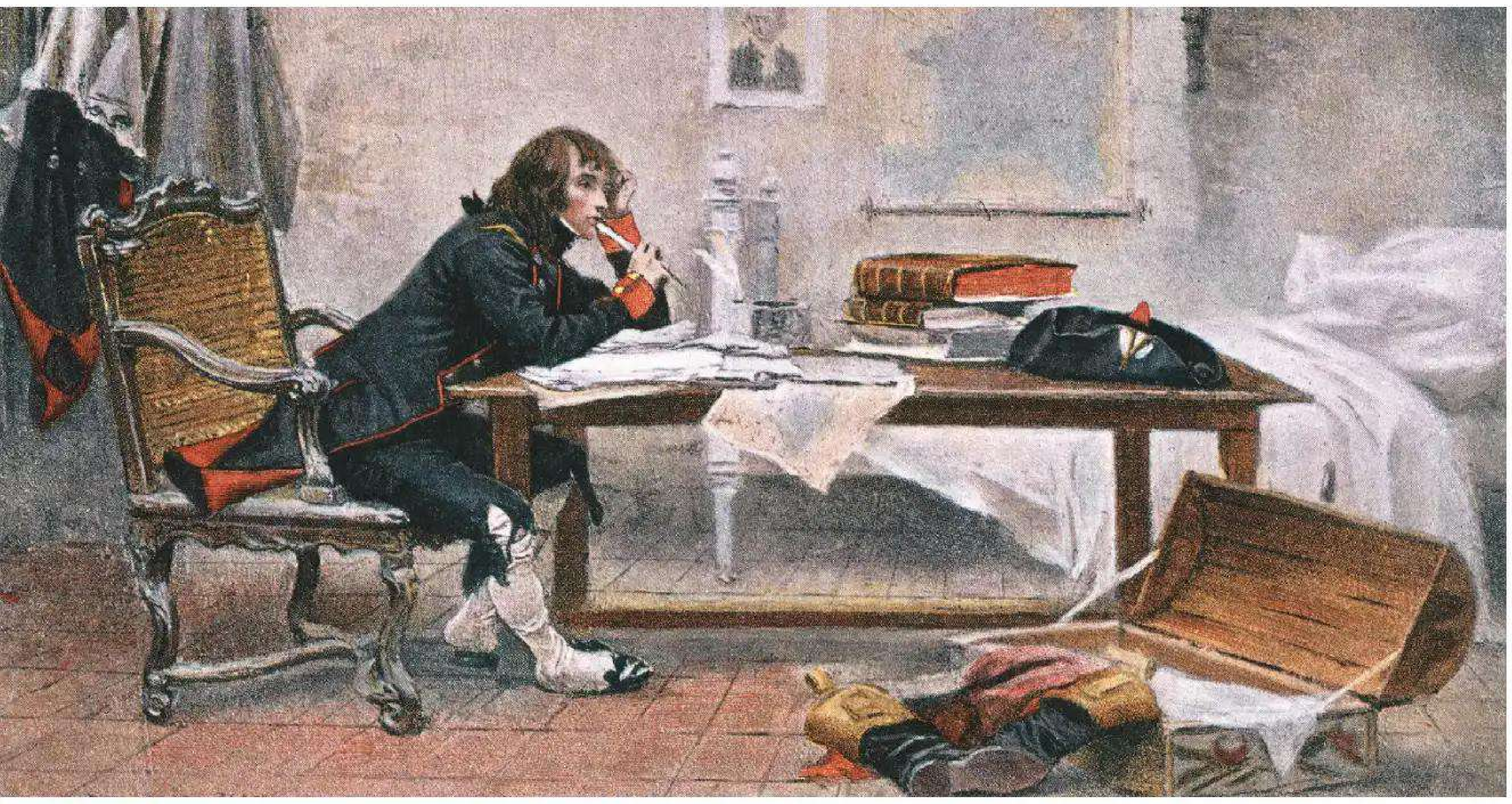


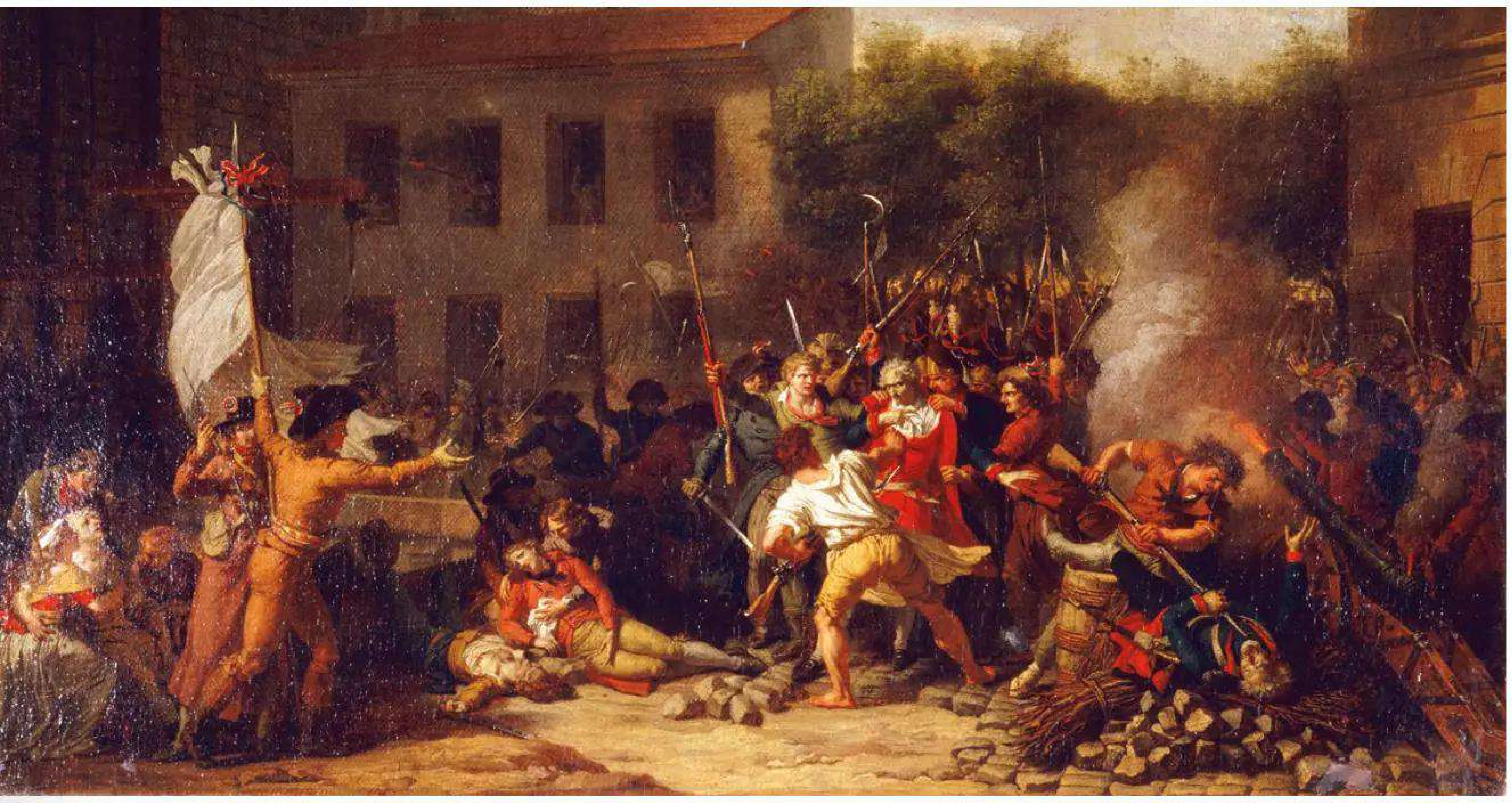
ABOVE Pasquale Paoli, a Corsican compatriot of Bonaparte and leader of its resistance movement

TOP-RIGHT From 1779 to 1784, Bonaparte was enrolled in the Military School in Brienne, Champagne

ABOVE-RIGHT The Storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789 was a key moment for the Revolution

LEFT Napoleon was in charge of the artillery at the Siege of Toulon in 1793





> “THOUGH NOT A POLITICAL ACTIVIST IN 1789, HE WAS SYMPATHETIC TO THE REFORMIST AIMS OF THE REVOLUTION”

Europe. As yet Napoleon had almost no combat experience, and had been horrified by his first sight of dead bodies as he watched from the sidelines when the royal palace was stormed on 10 August 1792. But, trained in artillery, he proved a useful recruit at the Siege of Toulon, the naval port occupied since August 1793 by counter-revolutionaries and the British. There he received his first combat wound, but devised a plan of bombardment that would drive the enemy out of the port. Its success brought him the sort of meteoric promotion that only occurs in wartime, from captain to one-star general.

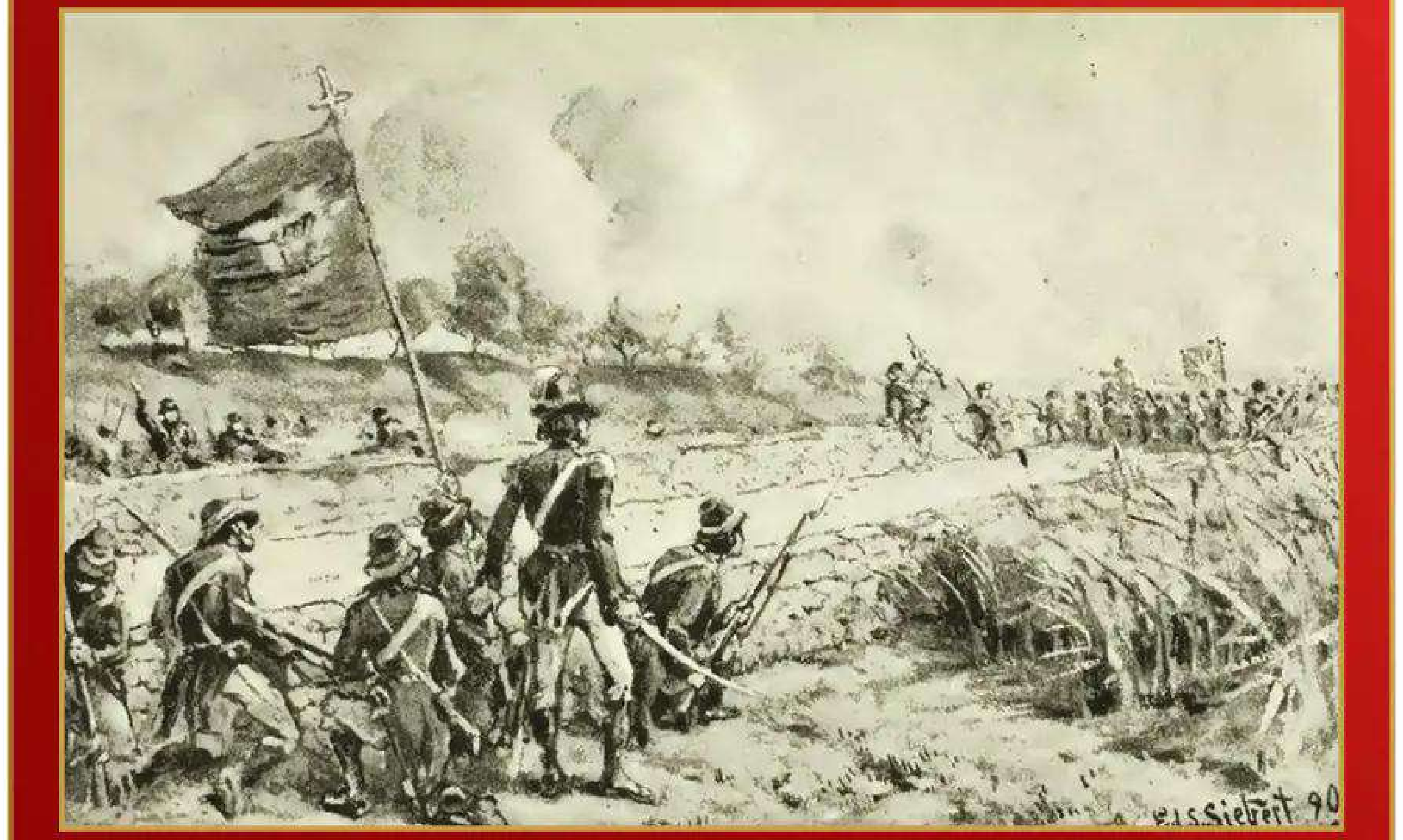
Yet he still needed the help of his lucky star to progress further. He was a protégé at Toulon of Augustin Robespierre (brother of revolutionary leader Maximilien), but Napoleon’s reputation was compromised when the Robespierres fell from favour in July 1794, and he was briefly imprisoned. He was soon released, but given his limited experience and associations the only fresh posting to come his way was internal police duty. He turned it down, and was cashiered for his refusal.

Within days, however, he was spotted by another contact he had made at Toulon, the deputy Paul Barras, now in charge of ensuring a transfer of power from the Convention that had governed the Republic for its first three years to a new constitution. Royalists in Paris, thwarted in their hopes of a monarchical restoration, planned to rise in protest, and Barras needed a soldier to command a force to confront the insurrection.

He turned to the unemployed Napoleon, who dispersed the rebels with what Thomas Carlyle memorably described as a “whiff of grapeshot”. Napoleon himself ascribed his victory in the revolutionary month of Vendémiaire (October 1795) to “a few shells”. But hundreds were killed. The Italian-sounding name of Bonaparte might still be unfamiliar, but everybody now knew about ‘General Vendémiaire’.

THE INVASION THAT WASN’T

Napoleon’s dream of conquering Britain was never to be fulfilled



Perhaps the greatest of Napoleon’s unfulfilled wishes was his desire to invade Britain, which he saw as France’s most dangerous and challenging foe. Only by quelling the threat from Great Britain, he thought, could France be assured of victory in Europe. And only by quelling the British Royal Navy could Britain be cowed.

Yet this time, Napoleon was forced to accept that his ambitions outstripped his capabilities and after meeting with Foreign Minister Talleyrand, the plans for the invasion of Britain were looking shaky. They looked shakier still when 1,100 French soldiers landed at Killala Bay in Ireland on 22 August 1798, hoping to find support. Instead they found a country that was at its lowest ebb and a populace unwilling to commit to assisting in the planned invasion of Great Britain. A month later the French surrendered, having held Killala alongside the embattled rebels for just 32 days. They were no match for the British troops sent to deal with them.

It had been a weak effort from the start and as Admiral Nelson outwitted the French navy in Egypt, one that was ultimately doomed to fail. Napoleon’s planned invasion of Great Britain, the jewel in his plans of conquest, never came to fruition.

MILITARY BREAKTHROUGH

The luck of knowing Barras continued as the former deputy was now at the head of the new regime as one of five constitutional Directors. He introduced the hero of the hour to a former mistress, the widow Beauharnais, soon to be known as Josephine. Napoleon was smitten, and within a few months had badgered her into marriage. He was also now lobbying for command in the field, and with Barras’s support he was put in charge of the secondary front in Italy from 2 March 1796.

It was here that Napoleon established his reputation as a general. Within weeks of his arrival his army had knocked the King of Sardinia out of the war and driven the Austrians back into Lombardy. Military historians have debated how far Napoleon ▶

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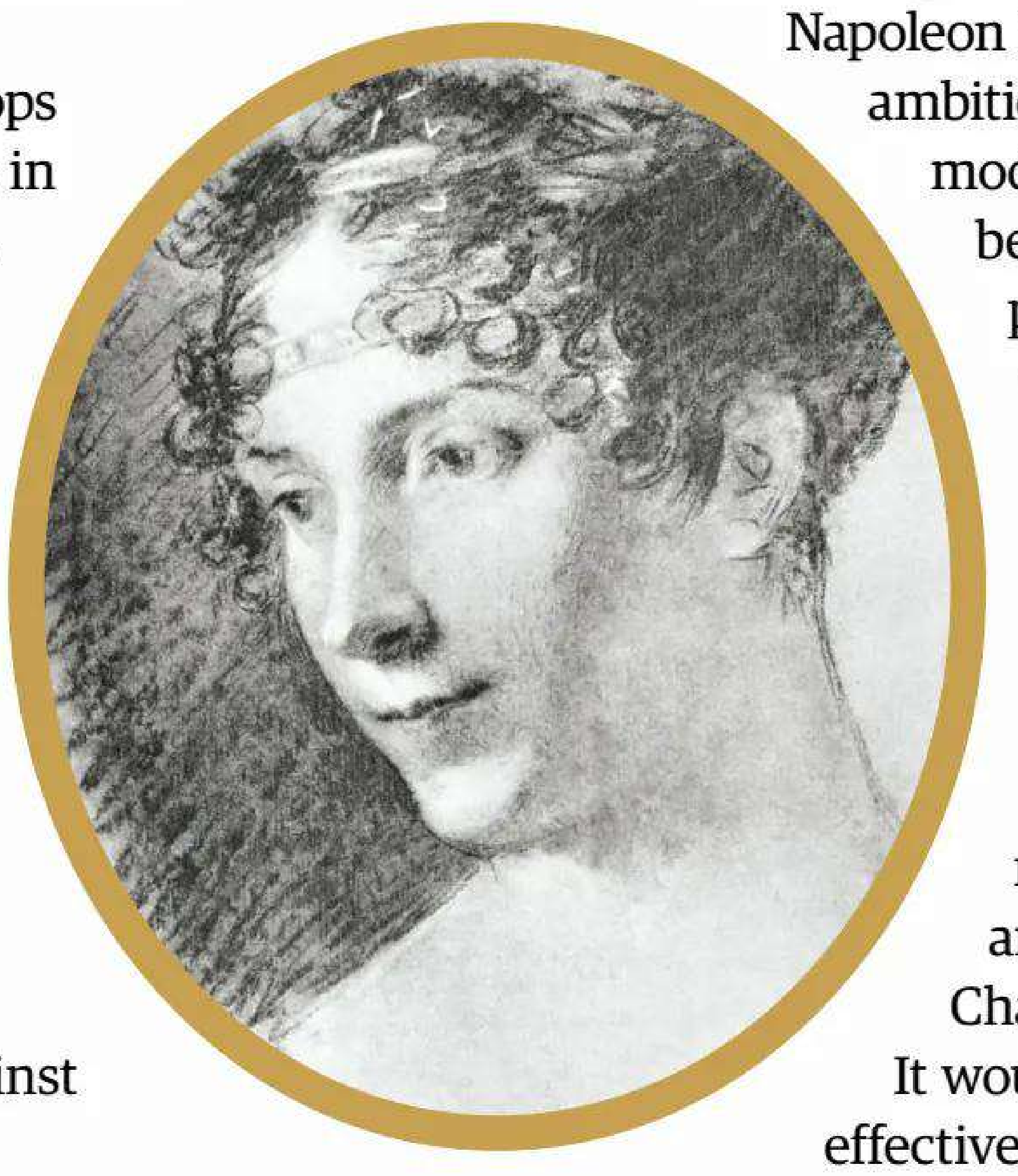
owed his Italian victories to talented subordinates, Austrian incompetence, or again, luck. But he also now emerged as a master of propaganda, and ensured that as commander in chief he got all the credit. Intoxicated by success, Napoleon began to set his sights even higher, as a man of destiny. "You've seen nothing yet," he told a visitor, "...I have tasted command, and I can't give it up." By the spring of 1797 he had defeated five armies and sent vast amounts of valuable loot back to France. He had also ignored repeated orders from Paris, dismembering immemorial states like Venice and establishing a Cisalpine Republic, a new but very personal French satellite in the former Austrian territory of Milan.

"BY THE SPRING OF 1797 HE HAD DEFEATED FIVE ARMIES AND SENT VAST AMOUNTS OF VALUABLE LOOT BACK TO FRANCE"

When finally his troops began to cross the Alps in a push towards Vienna, the Austrians begged for an armistice. Napoleon elevated the negotiation into nothing less than peace preliminaries, undercutting recent French advances on the German front. The preliminaries signed at Leoben had won the entire war against Austria, but as a result, Napoleon had begun to dictate the Republic's entire foreign policy. The Peace of Campo Formio a few months later largely reflected the terms he had imposed in the previous negotiations.


RIGHT Bonaparte married Josephine in 1796

Returning to Paris in triumph, Napoleon hid his political ambitions and behaved modestly in public, believing that "the pear was not ripe". He was now appointed to command an expedition against France's only remaining enemy, Great Britain. But whether sincerely or not, he advised that an invasion across the Channel was too risky. It would be much more effective, he argued, to enable a strike at their wealth in India by taking control of the Isthmus of Suez. This meant conquering Egypt.

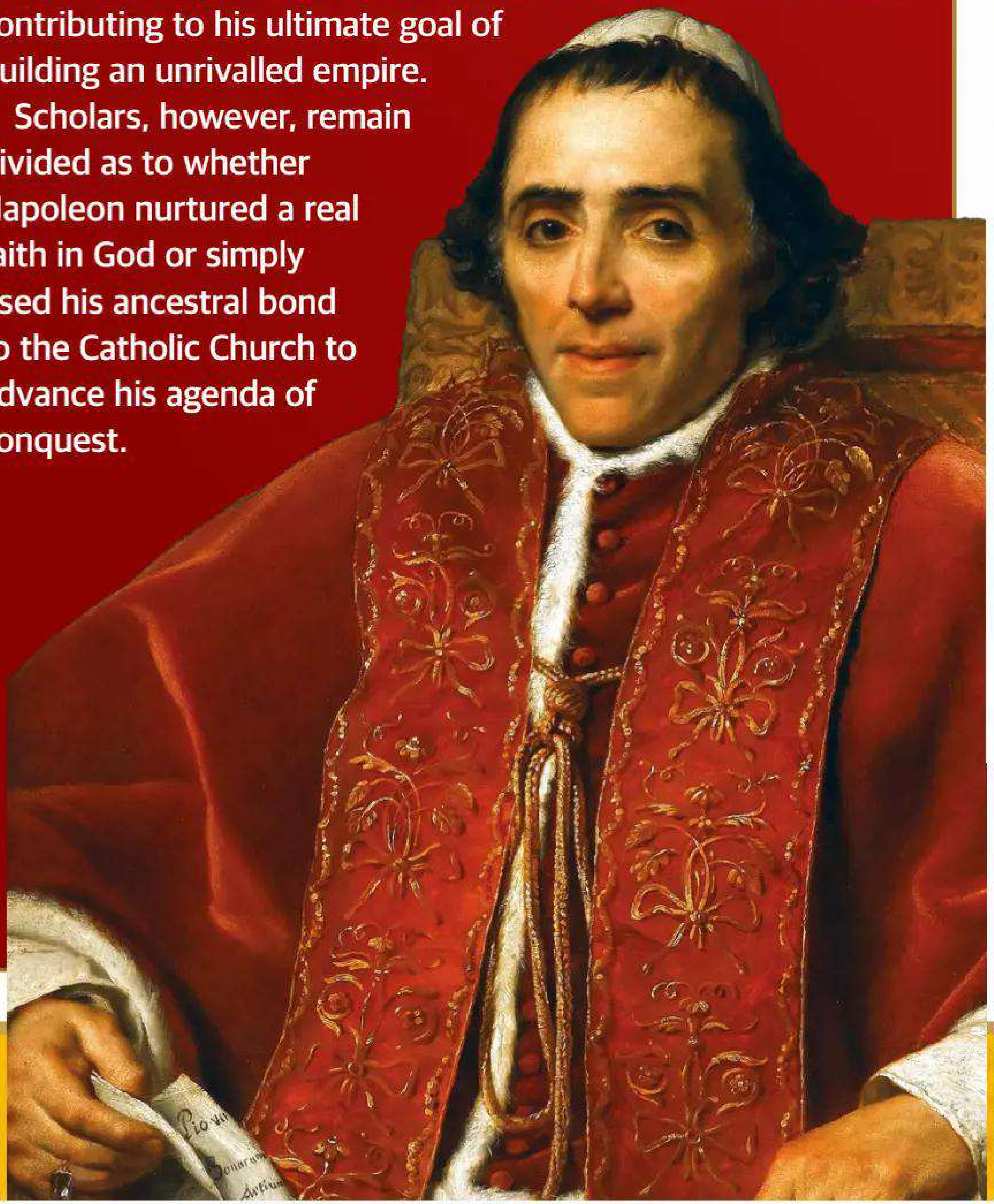
NAPOLEON AND THE CHURCH

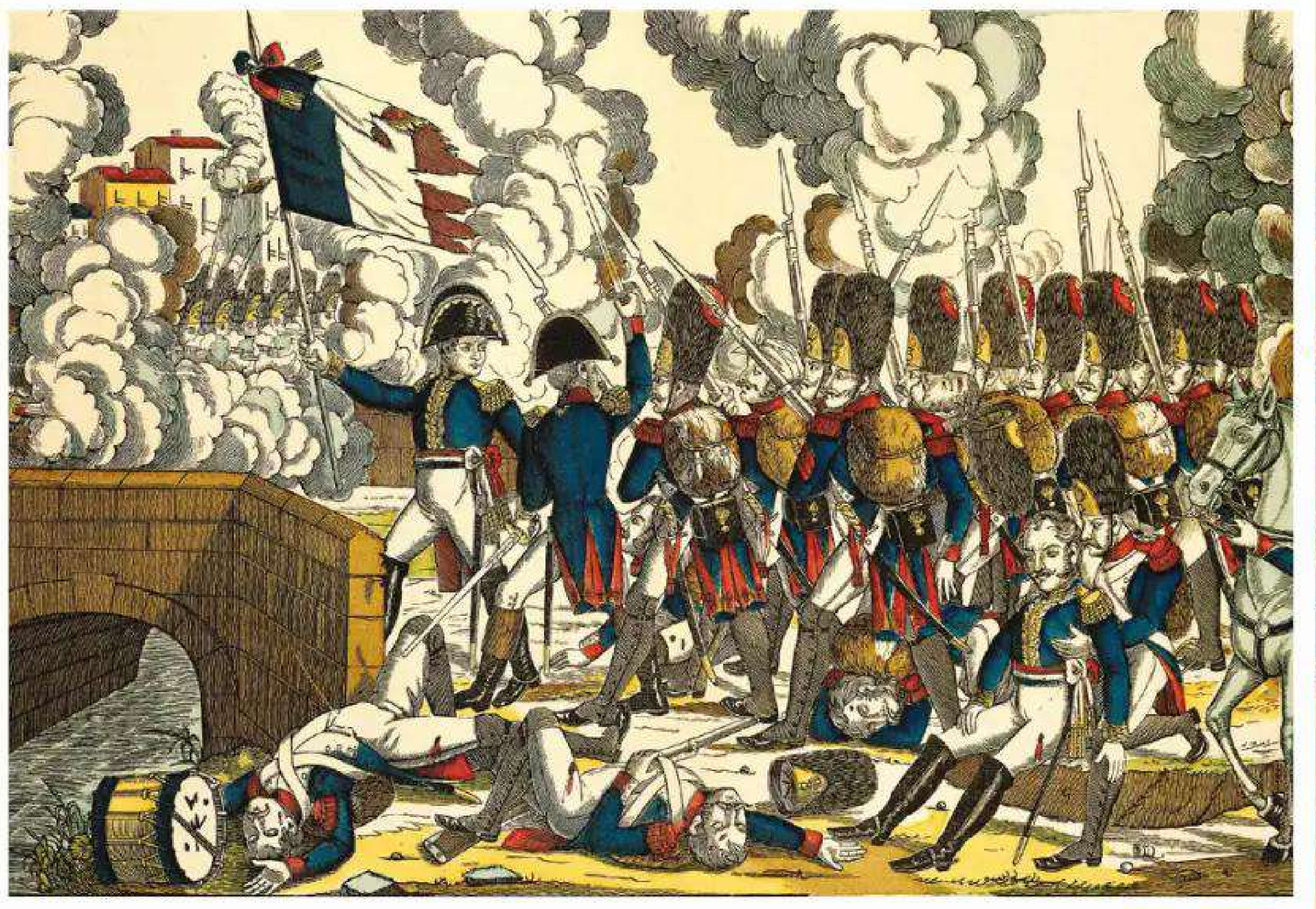
Where did Bonaparte stand on religion and the state?

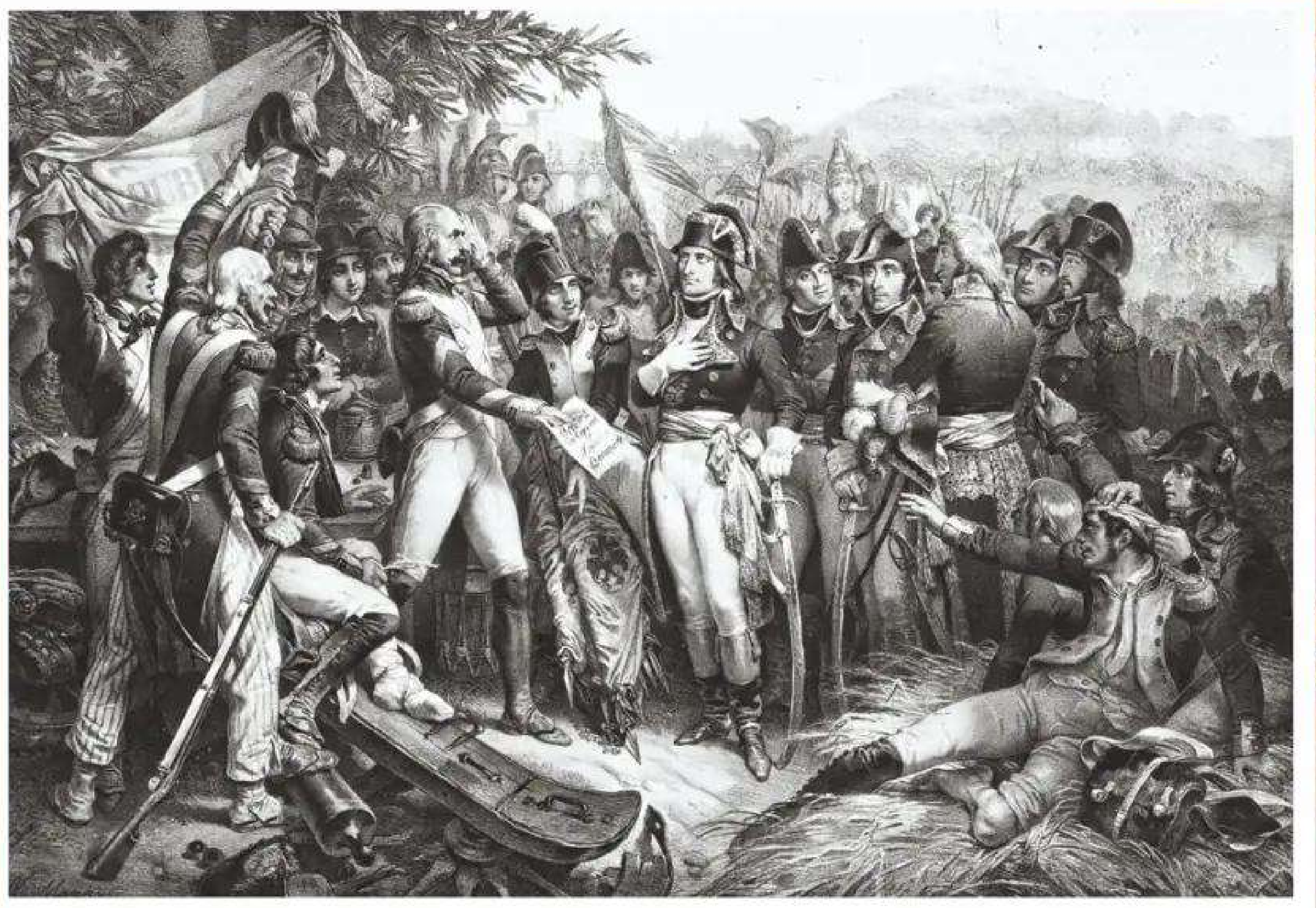
Although Napoleon Bonaparte believed that the Roman Catholic Church favoured the Catholic monarchy of Austria over the revolutionary government of France, he never disavowed the institution and recognised its prominent role in the fabric of society. Napoleon was born and baptised Catholic, remained Catholic his entire life, and received the last rites of the Church on his deathbed. Wherever he led conquering armies, Napoleon proved to be pragmatic and tolerant, respectful of different religious customs and allowing the native populations to continue their practices without interference.

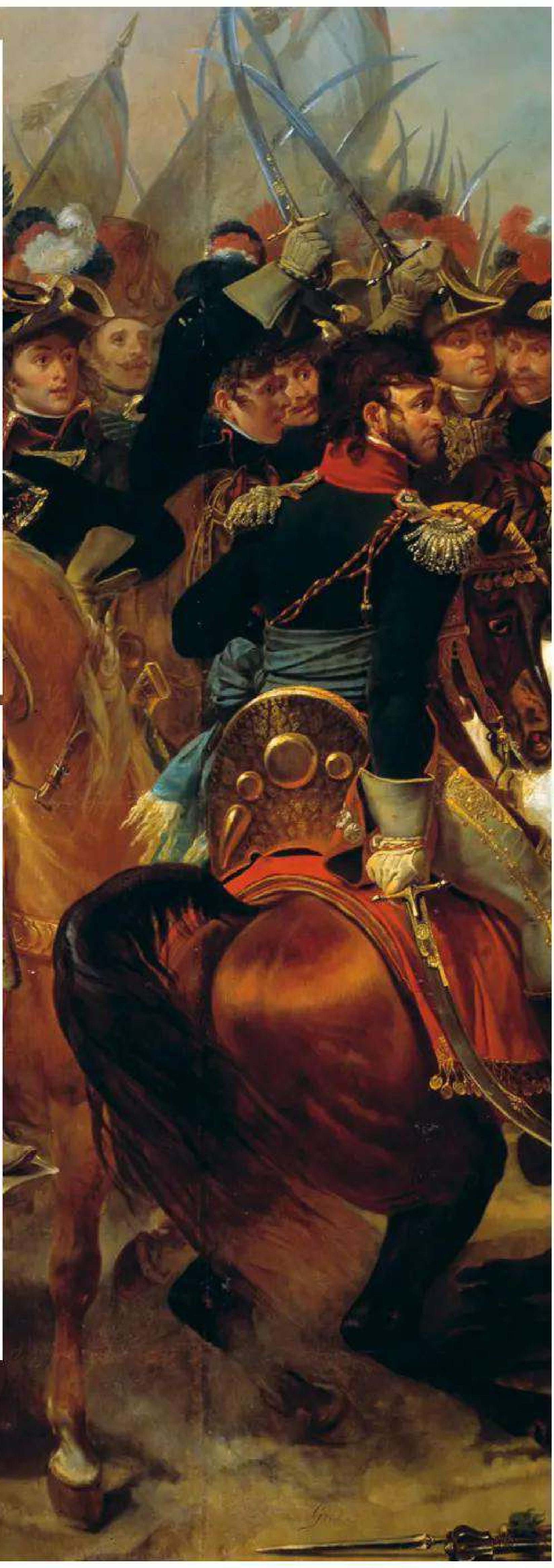
Nevertheless, Napoleon's personal religious views seem somewhat contradictory. Driven by insatiable ambition, he had gained an empire through force. Yet, later in life he is said to have admired the ability of Jesus Christ to influence the course of world events so profoundly with a message of love and salvation. Despite his Catholic upbringing, he once remarked, "All religions have been made by men." Therefore, it is likely that Napoleon considered the freedom to express religion as a tool to extend control of the masses, contributing to his ultimate goal of building an unrivalled empire.

Scholars, however, remain divided as to whether Napoleon nurtured a real faith in God or simply used his ancestral bond to the Catholic Church to advance his agenda of conquest.









TOP Napoleon leading his men over the bridge at the Battle of Arcole against Austria in 1796

ABOVE Napoleon built a strong relationship and reputation with the French Army

RIGHT Napoleon wanted to emulate the achievements of Alexander the Great in his Egyptian campaign

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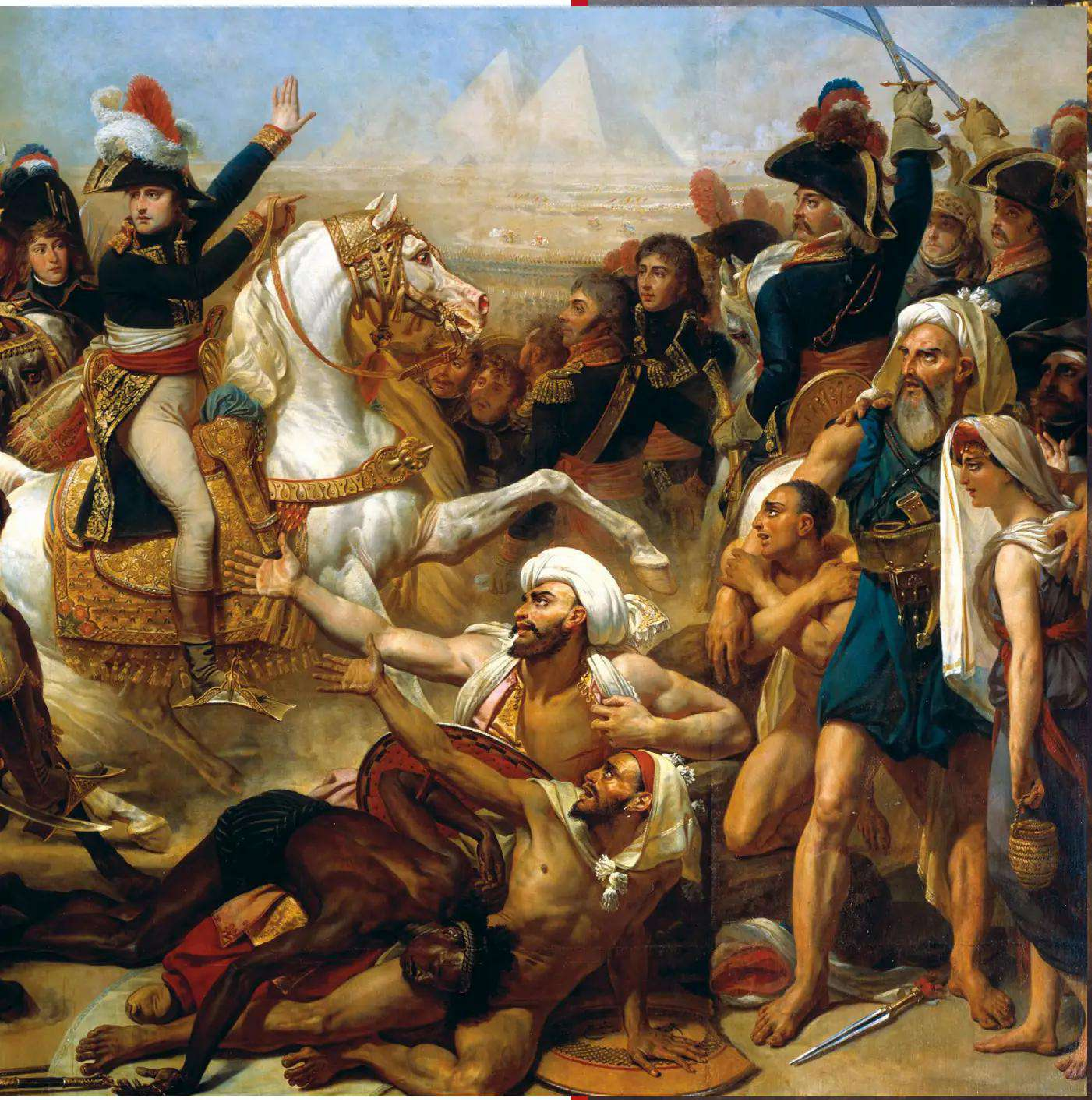
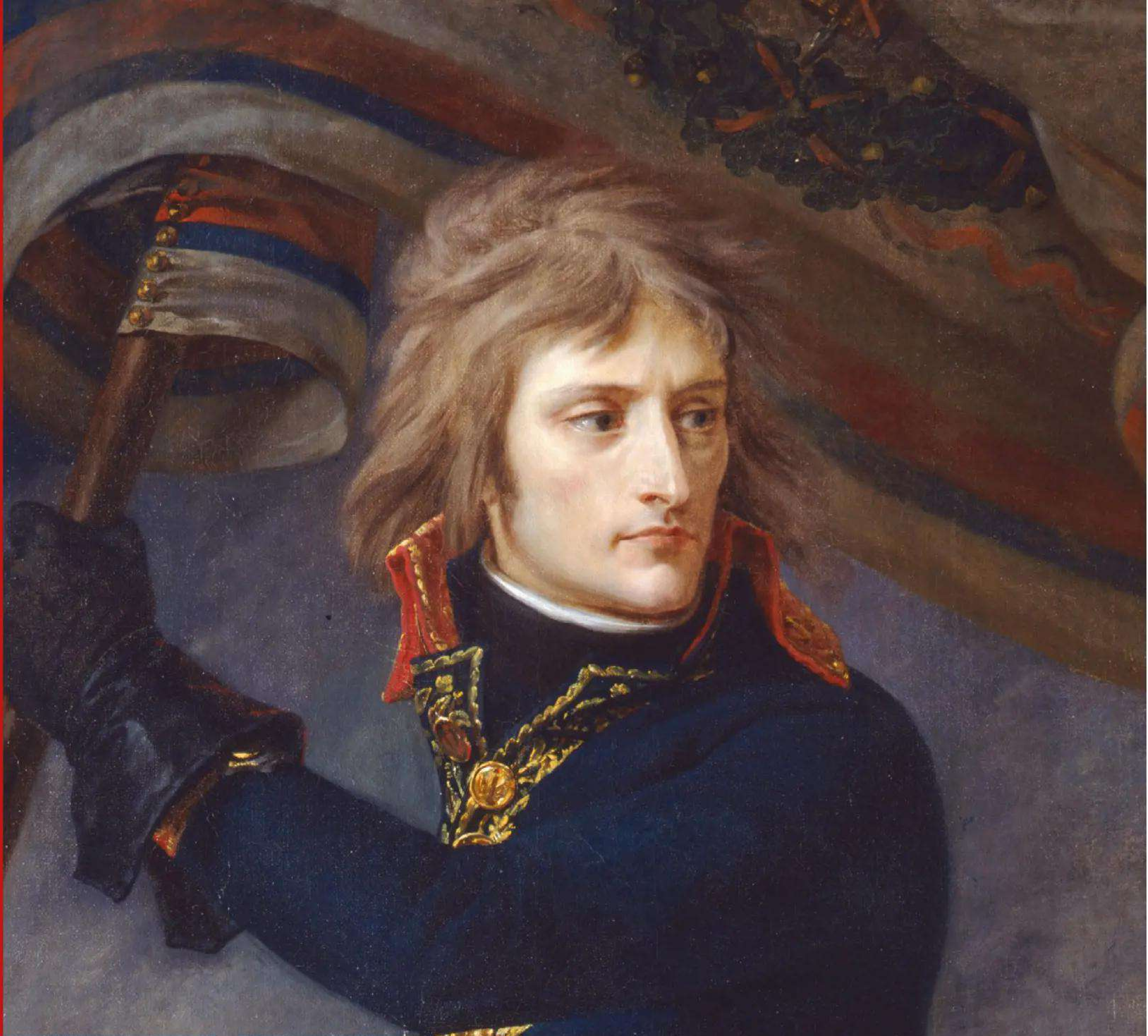
The prospect of Egypt also stirred Napoleon's romantic imagination with thoughts of emulating Alexander the Great. It would require vast military resources, but the Directory agreed to provide them, happy enough to remove his potentially dangerous presence from the centre of power. A expedition of ships and soldiers crossed the Mediterranean with him in the spring of 1798, taking the island of Malta on the way. The resistance of Egypt's rulers was crushed at the Battle of the Pyramids. It looked like another effortless triumph.

COURTING DISASTER

In fact it was a strategic disaster. Egypt was part of the Turkish Empire. The Turks had done nothing to provoke this attack, and responded by declaring war. They even allied with their traditional enemies the Russians, who had their own designs in the Mediterranean. When the Austrians allowed Russian forces to cross their own territory to attack the French in Italy, the recently concluded peace fell apart. And the British navy under Nelson destroyed most of the French fleet at the Battle of the Nile, marooning Napoleon and his army. ▶





A famous painting of Napoleon at Arcole, by Antoine-Jean Gros

France now faced a new international coalition, which rapidly overturned all that Napoleon had established in Italy.

Orders recalling him from Egypt never arrived, and his army was ravaged by an unsuccessful march north through Palestine. Only when the blockading British sent him old newspapers did he learn of French reverses in Europe. After defeating a Turkish landing at the Battle of Aboukir, he resolved to return to France, abandoning the remnants of his army. Luck was with him once again. A voyage of just over six weeks avoided British patrols, and brought him back to France.

SEIZING THE MOMENT

The Directors dared not court-martial this general who had deserted his command: rather, the news of Aboukir had confirmed him as a popular hero. And one Director at least, Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès, was already looking for a soldier to support plans for overturning the constitution.

For Napoleon, the 'pear' was now ripe, and the two men, though despising one another, combined to organise a coup d'état. On 19 Brumaire (10 November 1799) the two legislative councils, surrounded by troops under Napoleon's command, agreed to suspend the constitution until a new one was drafted.

Napoleon took pride in the fact that it was a bloodless affair. If anyone was threatened physically, it was him. He briefly fainted. But it brought him the supremacy he had long dreamed of. His was the dominant voice among the three Consuls running the interim government, and when the new constitution was finalised at the end of the year, it enshrined a pre-eminent First Consul who monopolised executive power. Nobody disputed his right to the role. "What's in the constitution?" ran a joke at the time. "Bonaparte" was the answer.

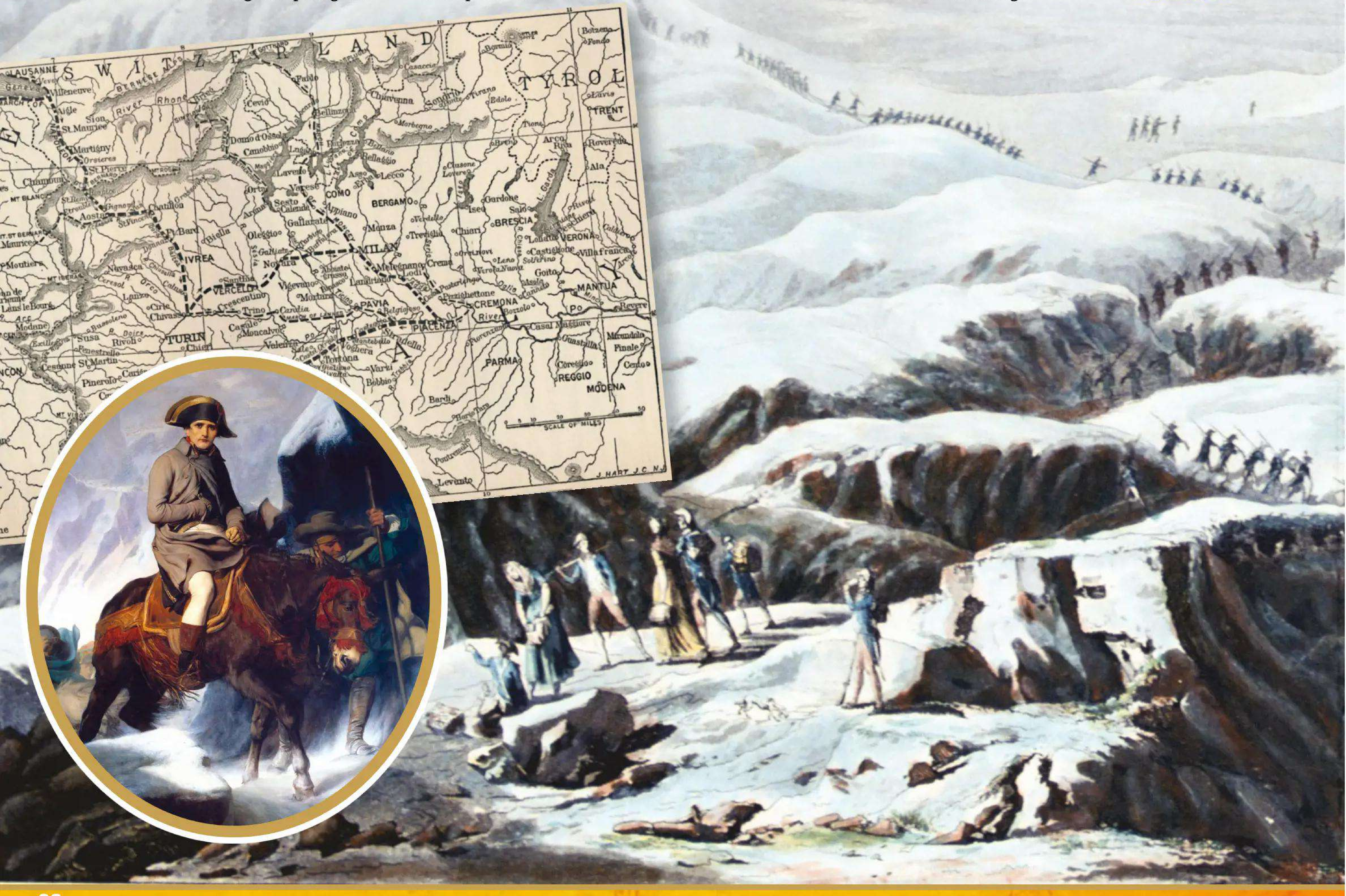
> "HIS WAS THE DOMINANT VOICE AMONG THE THREE CONSULS RUNNING THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT"

WINNING THE WAR

Contemplating his future during his first Italian campaign, Napoleon had said to himself, "I am the one who will end the Revolution". Now he had the authority to try it. He knew that his survival as head of state depended on it. The Revolution had created three basic concerns, but had been unable to resolve them: war, religion, and monarchy. War was the most immediately pressing. Although the Republic had begun to fend off the forces of the coalition by the time Napoleon returned from Egypt, the Austrians were back in control of Italy and southern Germany, much as they had been in 1796. He planned to deal with them in the same way as before. In the spring of 1800 he took them by surprise in crossing the Alps with a fresh army, and then confronted them at Marengo.

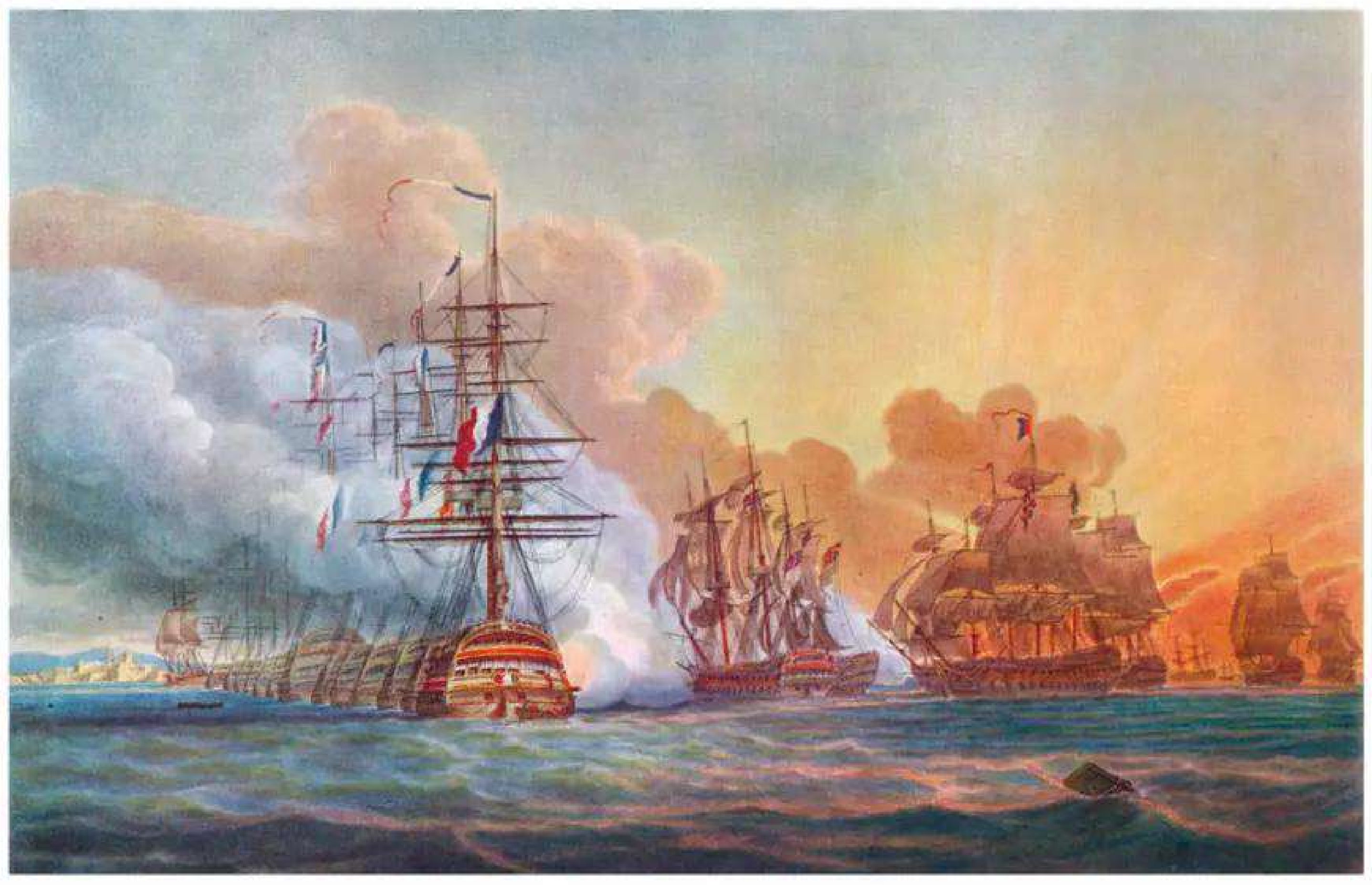
ABOVE-RIGHT Defeat to Nelson at Aboukir Bay, Egypt was a major blow to Napoleon

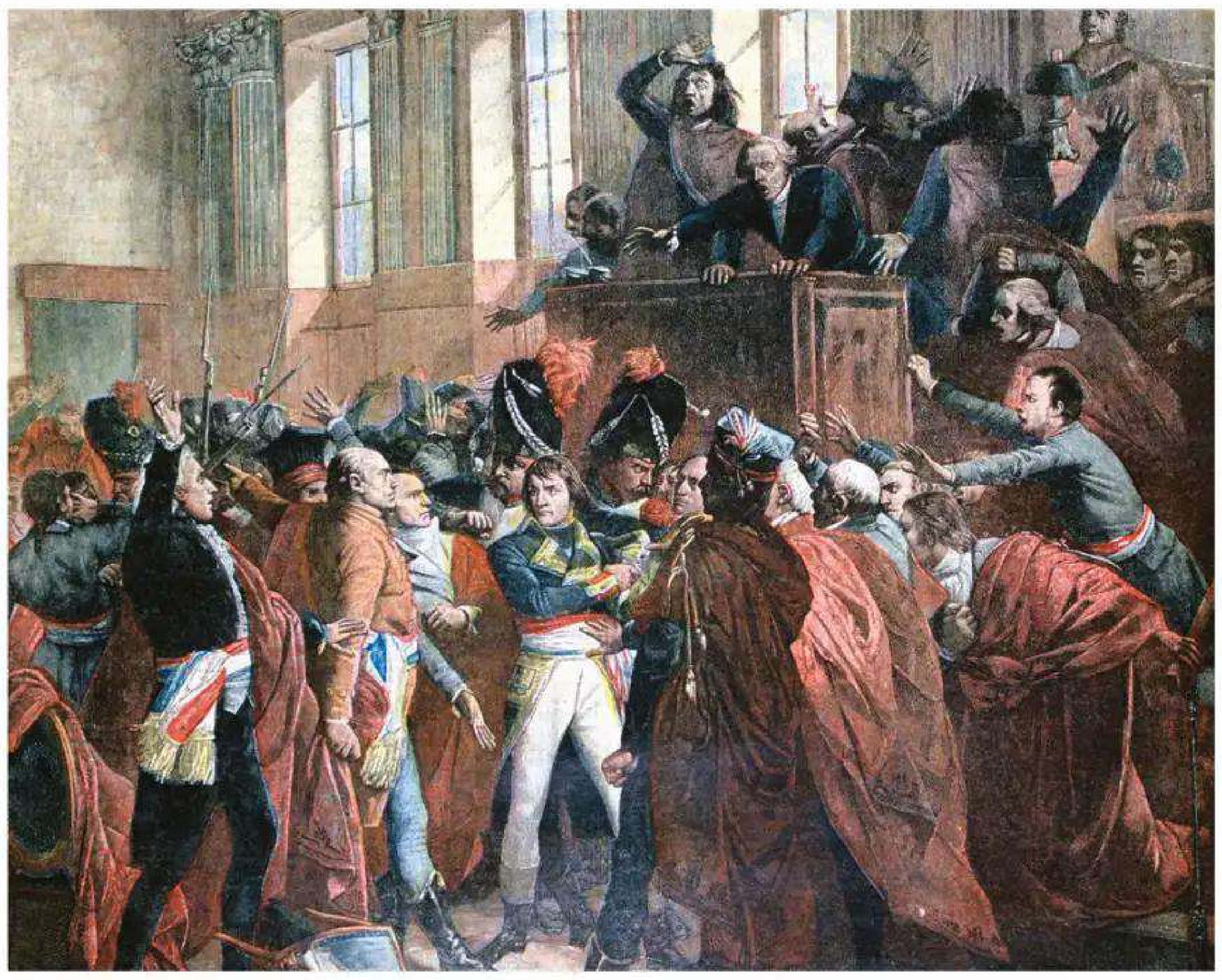
BELOW-RIGHT Napoleon's coup d'état of 18 Brumaire brought the Revolution to an end



BELOW Having taken power in France, Napoleon crossed the Alps to reclaim territory lost to Austria in Italy

BELOW-INSET Having crossed the Saint Bernard Pass in the Alps, Napoleon led the Marengo Campaign in Italy, driving the Austrians from the region





It was a battle he nearly lost, and the enemy was far from destroyed. But the Austrian commander sued for an armistice, so Napoleon was able to claim instant victory at the scene of his former triumphs. This time it still took another battle, won at Hohenlinden in Germany by the rival general, Jean Victor Marie Moreau, to bring the Austrians to the negotiating table. The First Consul characteristically claimed all the credit for bringing peace with victory to the continent with the Treaty of Lunéville signed in February 1801.

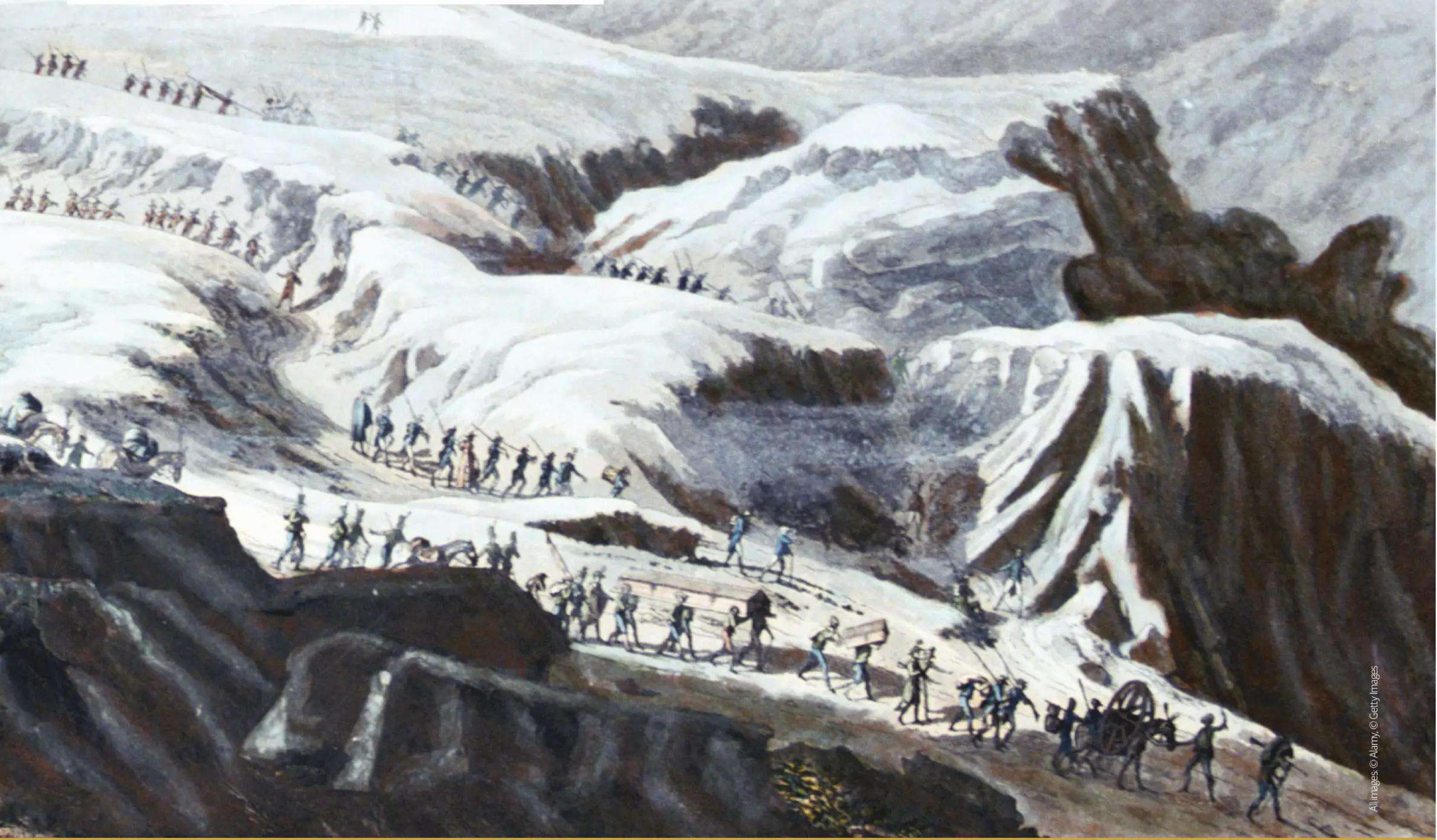
It was true that the Republic was still at war with Great Britain, but here luck once again intervened. A disagreement between King George III and prime minister William Pitt brought the latter's resignation, and his war-weary successor Henry Addington opened peace negotiations with France.

Preliminaries were agreed by October 1801, leading to a final settlement at Amiens in March the next year. The French revolutionary wars were at last fully concluded, and on terms highly favourable to France.

ENDING THE REVOLUTION

Peace was celebrated at a grand Easter Mass, which also marked the resolution of the religious problem. Ever since the French clergy had been subjected to an oath of loyalty in 1790, the church had been split. The pope had condemned the new Civil Constitution of the Clergy devised by the revolutionaries, as all priests, and their flocks, had been forced by the oath to choose between Paris and Rome. It was the deepest of all divides created by the Revolution. When the monarchy was overthrown and the king executed, counter-revolutionary ideology brought the claims of religion and royalism together. In 1795 the Republic renounced all religious affiliations, and while Napoleon was in Egypt, French forces marched on Rome and brought the pope as a prisoner back to France, where he died.

But during his earlier Italian campaigns Napoleon had been impressed by papal authority, and when in the spring of 1800 a new pope was finally elected, the First ▶



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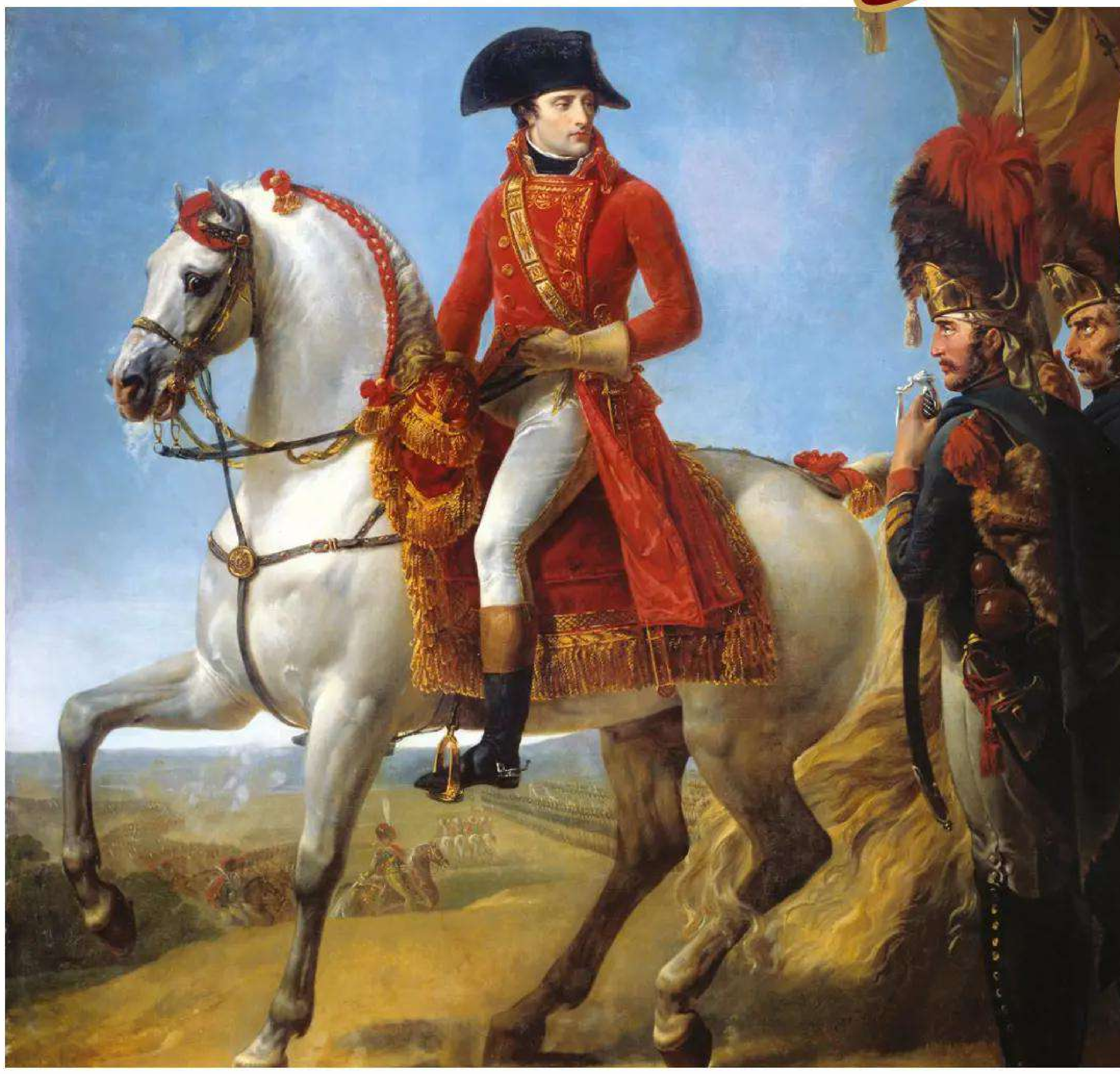
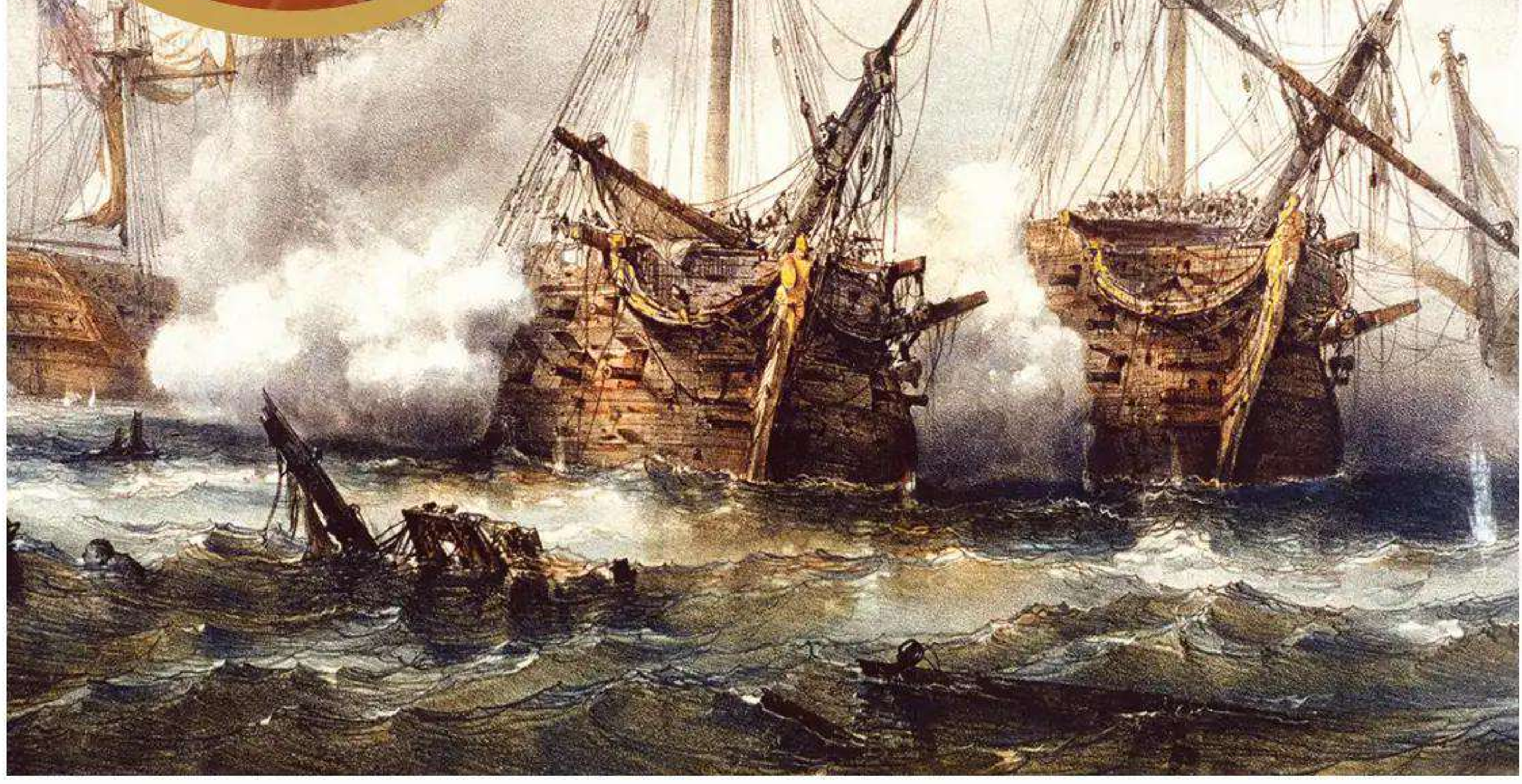
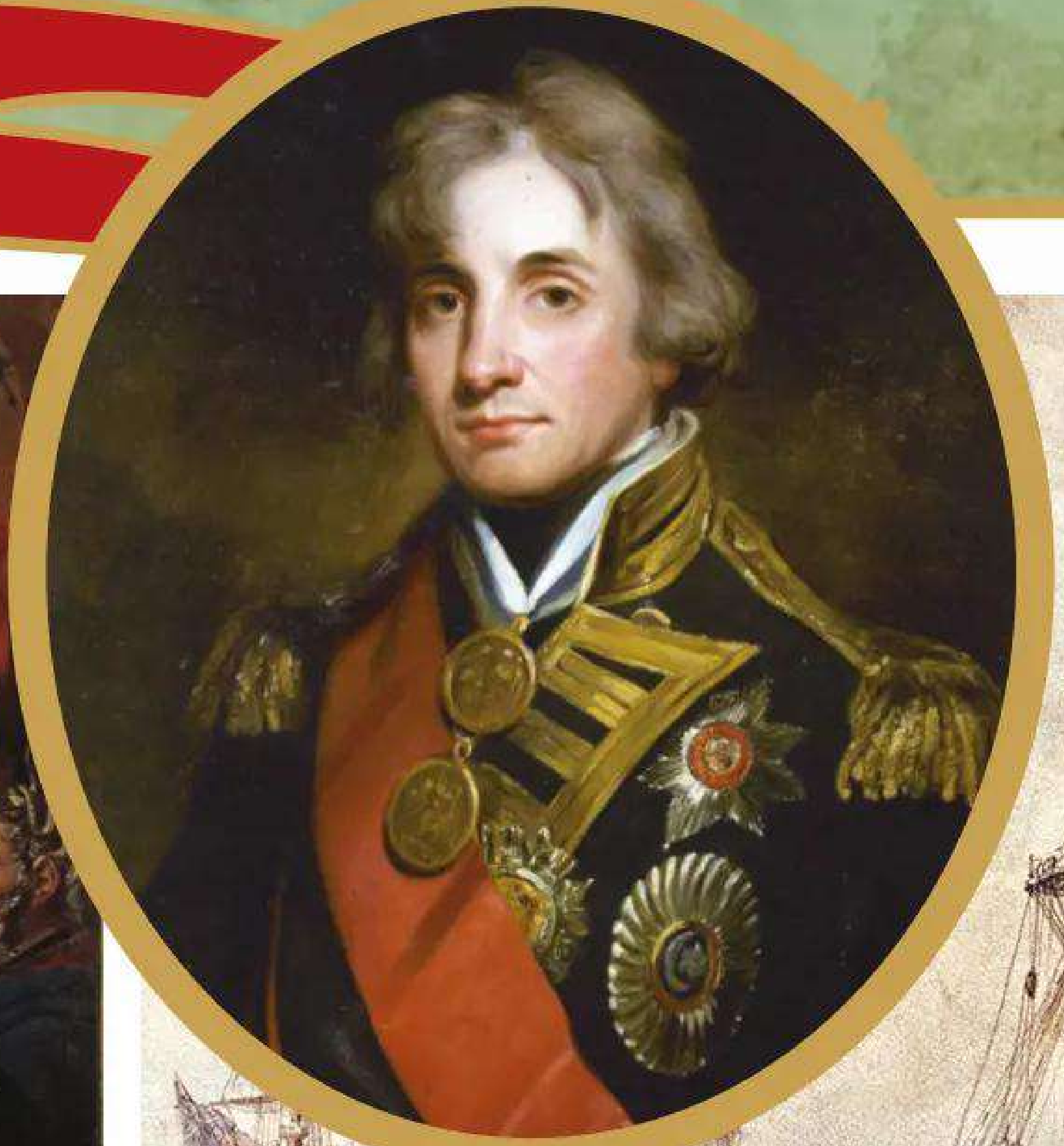


ABOVE-LEFT Napoleon reviewing his troops after the Battle of Marengo



ABOVE-RIGHT Defeat at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 was surrounded by resounding victories on the continent for Napoleon



ABOVE-INSET Admiral Nelson and Napoleon are thought to have had a begrudging respect for one another

Consul offered a deal with what he saw as the only power able to deliver one. Facing down the hostility even of most of his political collaborators and the army, he embarked on months of negotiation with Rome that he said was the most difficult thing he ever accomplished. But in the end Pope Pius VII accepted a Concordat restoring public worship in France under strict state control. The effect was to defuse the most potent source of resistance to the consular regime, and to rob royalism not only of its spiritual but also its political legitimacy.

RESTORING MONARCHICAL POWER

When Napoleon took power, many royalists hoped that like General Monck in England in 1660, this soldier would restore the heirs of the executed king to a throne. The Bourbon pretender even wrote urging him to do so. After Marengo, he got his reply. Napoleon politely refused. As in 1796, he had tasted power, and would not give it up now. Collaborators had been urging him from the start to make himself a monarch, and soon enough his consular term was extended from ten years to life. But life was the problem: if Napoleon should die, could the new regime survive? Various assassination attempts emphasised the danger to the regime.

The answer seemed to be to make his authority hereditary. He professed not to want it. "I have made kings," he said, "without wishing to be one", and during the peace of Amiens there were no serious threats to his life. But when in 1803 the peace broke down, the British supported new plots against him. He needed to found a dynasty to ensure an orderly succession. The move was underpinned, like every increase in his power, by a rigged referendum in which the Nation could be said to have endorsed his monarchy: not just as a king, but a hereditary emperor. He crowned himself on 2 December 1804. The Revolution was finally over.

WARS OF CONQUEST

The renewal of war had pushed him into taking the throne, but he welcomed both. He loved waging war, and he had not taken the field for four years. He blamed the British for the breakdown, and began to assemble and train an invasion army

THE IRON CROWN

Why Napoleon chose this simple circlet for his Italian coronation

When Napoleon crowned himself king of Italy on 26 May 1805, he placed the Iron Crown of Lombardy on his own head and declared, "God gave it to me, beware whoever touches it."

The crown is one of the oldest royal insignias in Christendom. This circlet of gold and gemstones was supposedly made for St Helena around a central band of iron that was once a nail on the cross. For centuries the crown had been used in the coronations of the kings of Italy. Charlemagne himself wore it when he was crowned king of the Lombards in the 8th century, as did many Holy Roman Emperors who came after.

Napoleon would certainly have appreciated Charlemagne's connection with the Iron Crown of Lombardy. In conquering Italy, he had followed in the footsteps of that legendary monarch and just like Charlemagne before him, had every intention to expand his own empire across the continent.

Napoleon founded the Order of the Iron Crown in 1805 and on its insignia, the French Imperial Eagle familiar from the banners of the Grande Armée is depicted atop the Iron Crown. This forever united a potent symbol of ancient power and God's chosen with that of the emperor of the French.

on the Channel coast. Whether he really thought, any more than in 1798, that a landing in England was possible, is uncertain. In any case Nelson's victory at Trafalgar in October 1805 destroyed any hopes of controlling the Channel, and the 'Grand Army' had already marched away some weeks before that to confront a new Austro-Russian alliance determined to curb the upstart emperor's seemingly limitless ambitions.

> “THE MOVE WAS UNDERPINNED, LIKE EVERY INCREASE IN HIS POWER, BY A RIGGED REFERENDUM”

The next two years brought Napoleon's career to the peak of its success. At the head of the superbly trained Grand Army, he defeated all his continental enemies. In 1805 he routed the Austrians at Ulm and Austerlitz, and imposed losses on them far more severe than at Campo Formio. The Russians were also defeated at Austerlitz, but struck a new alliance with Prussia, alarmed and humiliated by the expansion of French power in Germany.

The Prussians in their turn found themselves routed at Jena in 1806, their king, Frederick William III, and his family retreating into Russian protection. At Eylau in February 1807 the Grand Army held the Russians to a bloody draw, but at Friedland in June the Czar's army was roundly defeated. The war was over, and the emperors Napoleon and Alexander came to terms a few weeks later, famously face to face on a raft moored at Tilsit on the River Niemen.

THE TURNING POINT

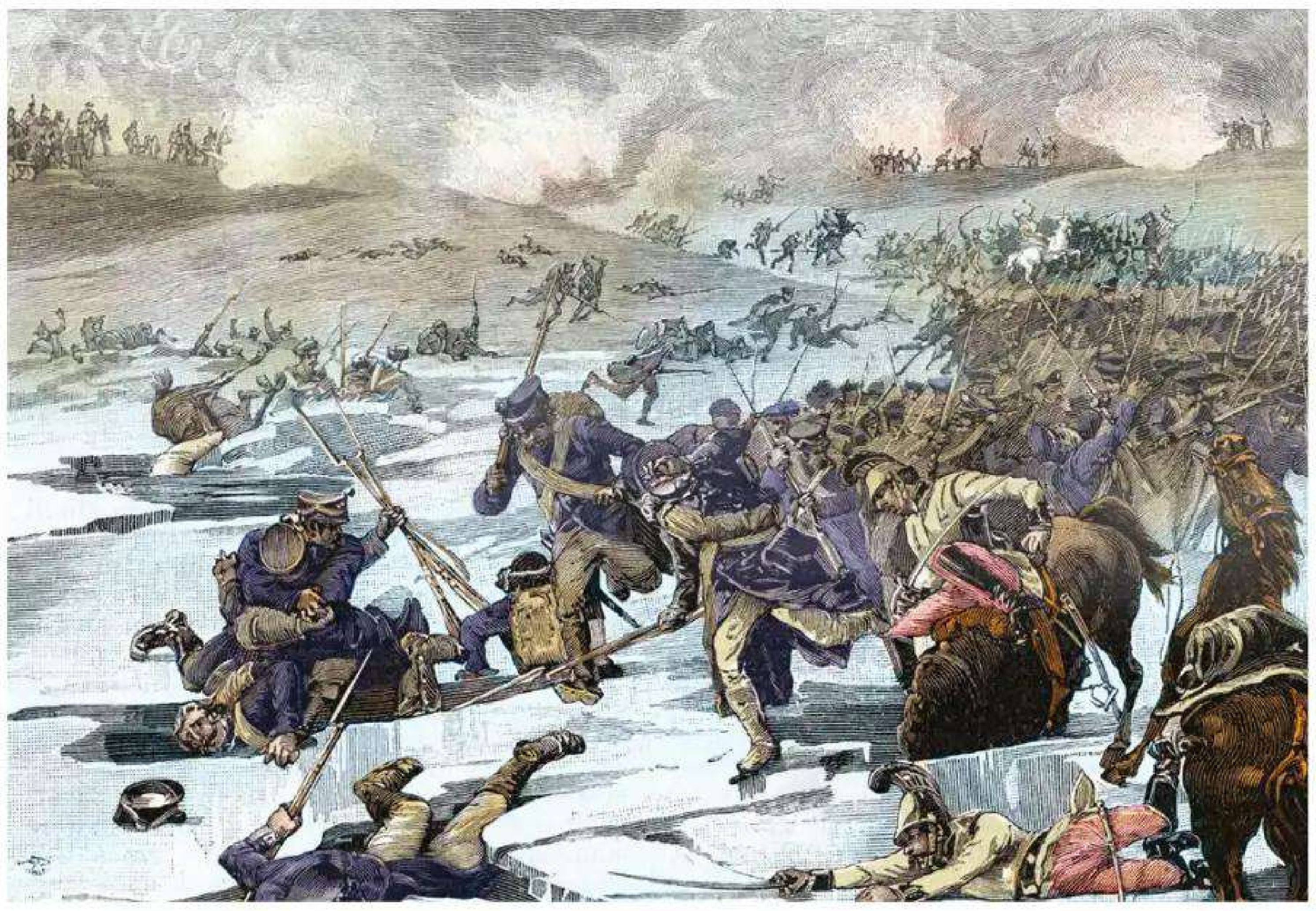
Prussia was the main loser at Tilsit, but the Russians also agreed to cooperate in a new French policy designed to defeat the British: the continental system. Upon his triumphant entry to the Prussian capital in October 1806, Napoleon had issued the Berlin Decree, designed to blockade the British Isles and exclude British trade from the continent: economic warfare on a grand scale. But in order to make it work, the whole continental coastline needed to be sealed off.

This policy became the underlying driving force of the new Napoleonic empire. It led to the absorption of the whole of Italy, with Napoleon's brother Joseph initially becoming king of Naples. And from 1808 it brought a determined push to control the Iberian Peninsula. But it was here that Napoleon's famous luck began to run out. Neither Spain nor Portugal were easily subdued, and their resistance afforded the British a continental foothold. In what became the Peninsular War, or what Napoleon called his 'Spanish ulcer', they were never dislodged. It was still a long road to Napoleon's downfall, but the decline began on the other side of the Pyrenees.

BELOW-INSET Napoleon continued to have success on the Continent, if not at sea

BOTTOM-INSET Uprisings against French rule, such as in Madrid in 1808, were a regular concern for Napoleon

BOTTOM Napoleon was crowned emperor of France on 2 December 1804



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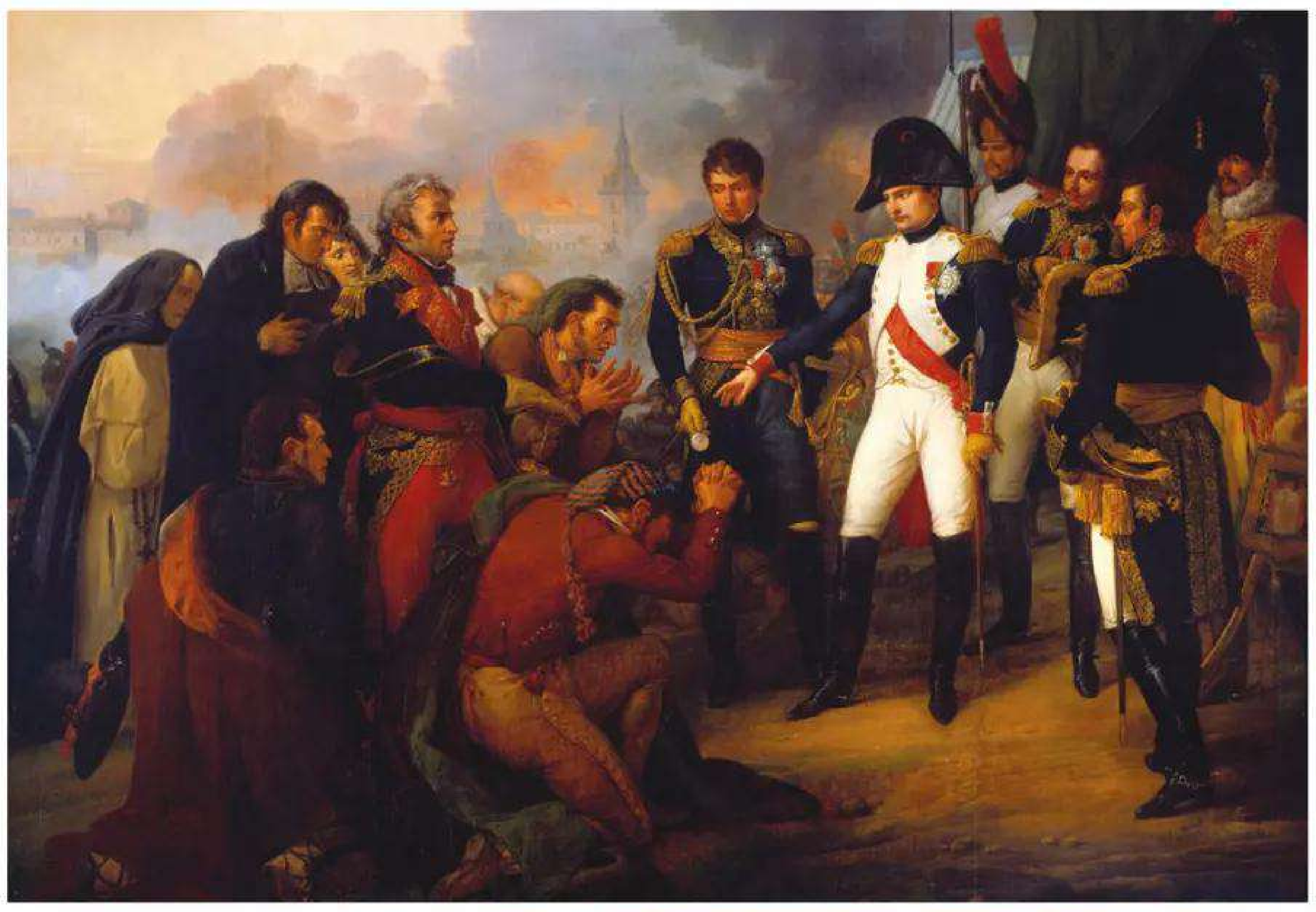


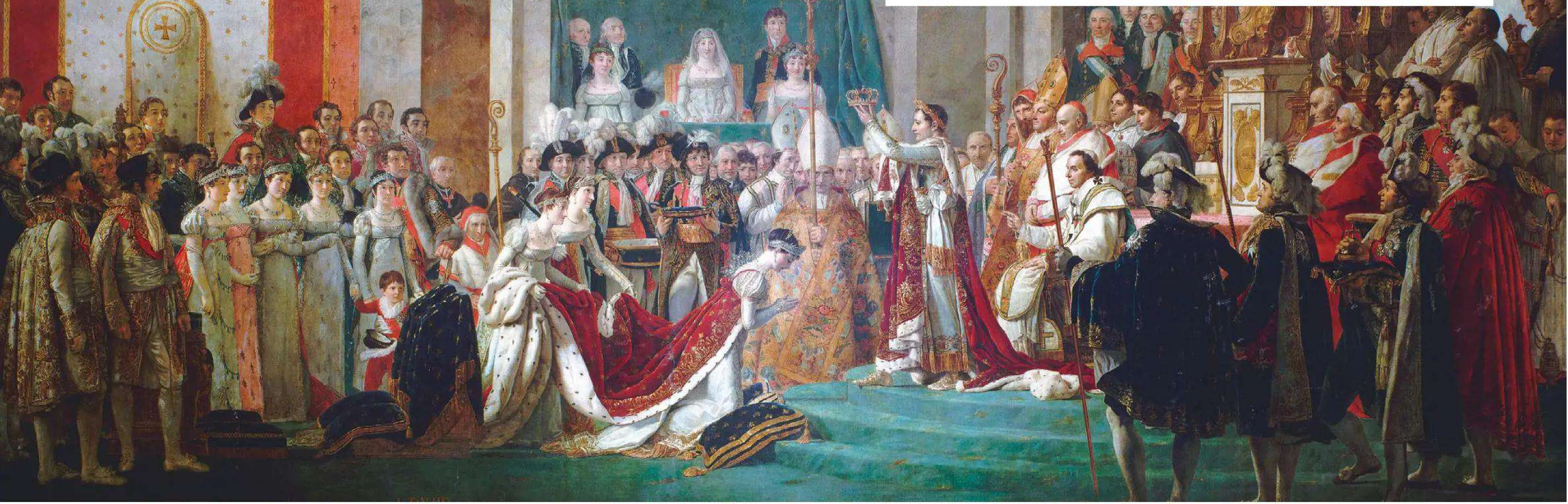


Image source: wiki/Imperial War Museums

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF COMMANDER CRABB

He was a war hero and Britain's number one diver, but during a secret mission investigating a Russian cruiser, he vanished never to return…

Written by Callum McKelvie

On 19 April 1956, Lieutenant-Commander Lionel "Buster" Crabb vanished into the murky waters of Portsmouth Harbour, never to return. Crabb was a diver of some renown and had been investigating the Russian cruiser Ordzhonikidze on a secret spy mission for MI6. A hero of World War II, he helped defend British ships at port in Gibraltar from Italian saboteurs and afterwards became a public figure as well as an occasional spy. Then, at the age of 47 he seemingly disappeared off the face of the earth.

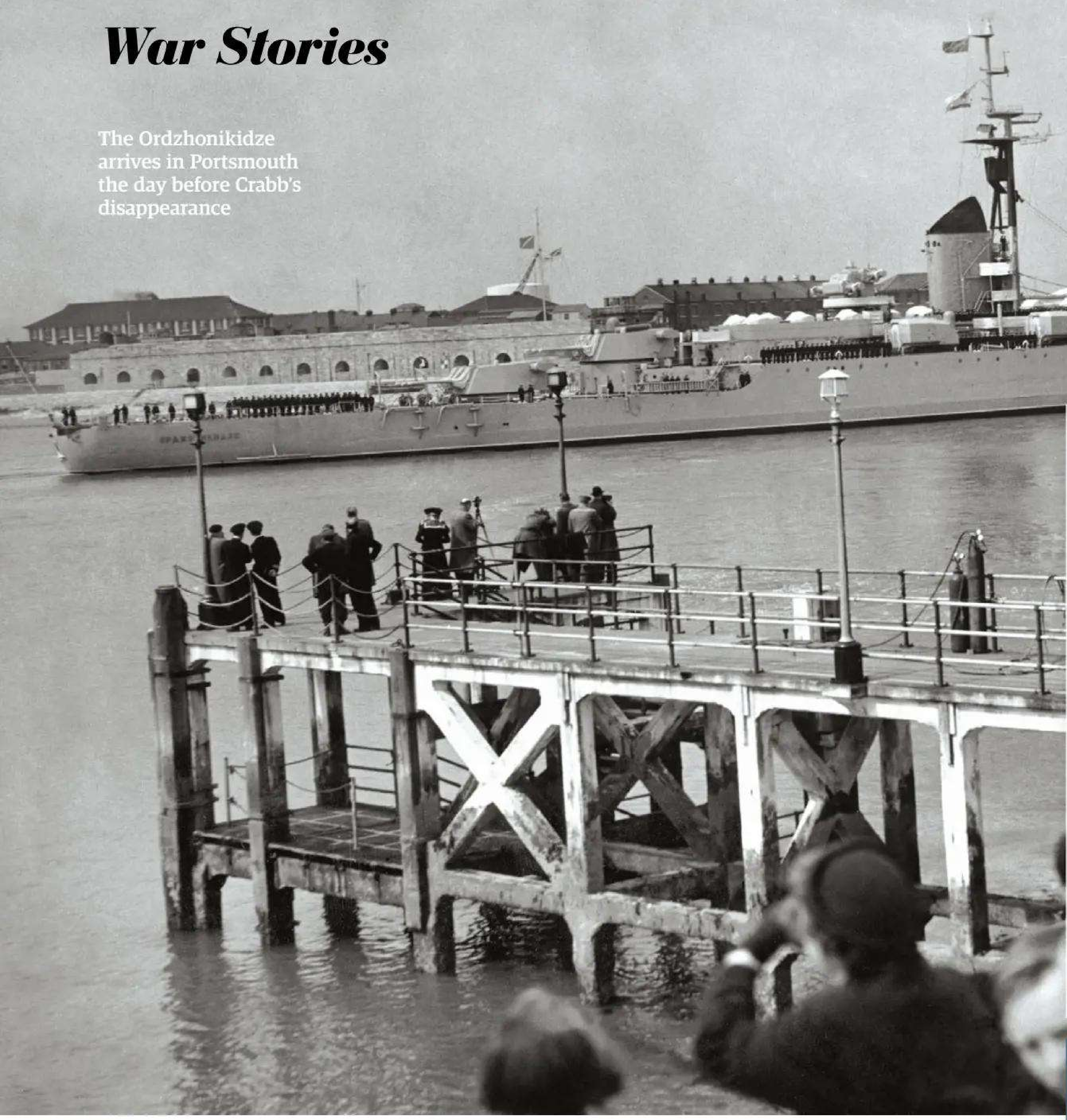
The important files pertaining to Crabb's disappearance remain under embargo and their contents top secret until at least 2057. Was he murdered attempting to defect? Captured by Soviet agents? Or was his death simply an accident? Commander Crabb's fateful final dive is just one part of a life story as enigmatic as the circumstances surrounding his disappearance.

A MAN ADRIFT

Lionel Kenneth Phillip Crabb was born on 28 January 1909 to a poor family in Streatham, South West London. His family's poverty was compounded in 1914 when his father was killed during action in World War I. Lionel was only five years old. As a youth he spent time studying in Brighton, but he seemed to have struggled academically and detested the experience. According to Mike and Jacqui Welham in their book *The Crabb Enigma*, he earned a reputation as the family's 'black sheep', preferring a more outgoing and adventurous lifestyle.

Even at this young age, Crabb had fantasies of a life at sea. He spent three years on the training ship Conway but ran away to the United States where he remained for a short time. By the 1930s he returned to England and it is here that his life becomes difficult to follow. According to the Welhams he had an unhappy experience working as an underwear model, before either jointly running an ▶

"HE COULD OFTEN BE SEEN STRUTTING THE STREETS WEARING A MONOCLE AND CARRYING A DISTINCTIVE SWORD STICK WITH A SILVER CRAB-SHAPED HANDLE"



The Ordzhonikidze arrives in Portsmouth the day before Crabb's disappearance

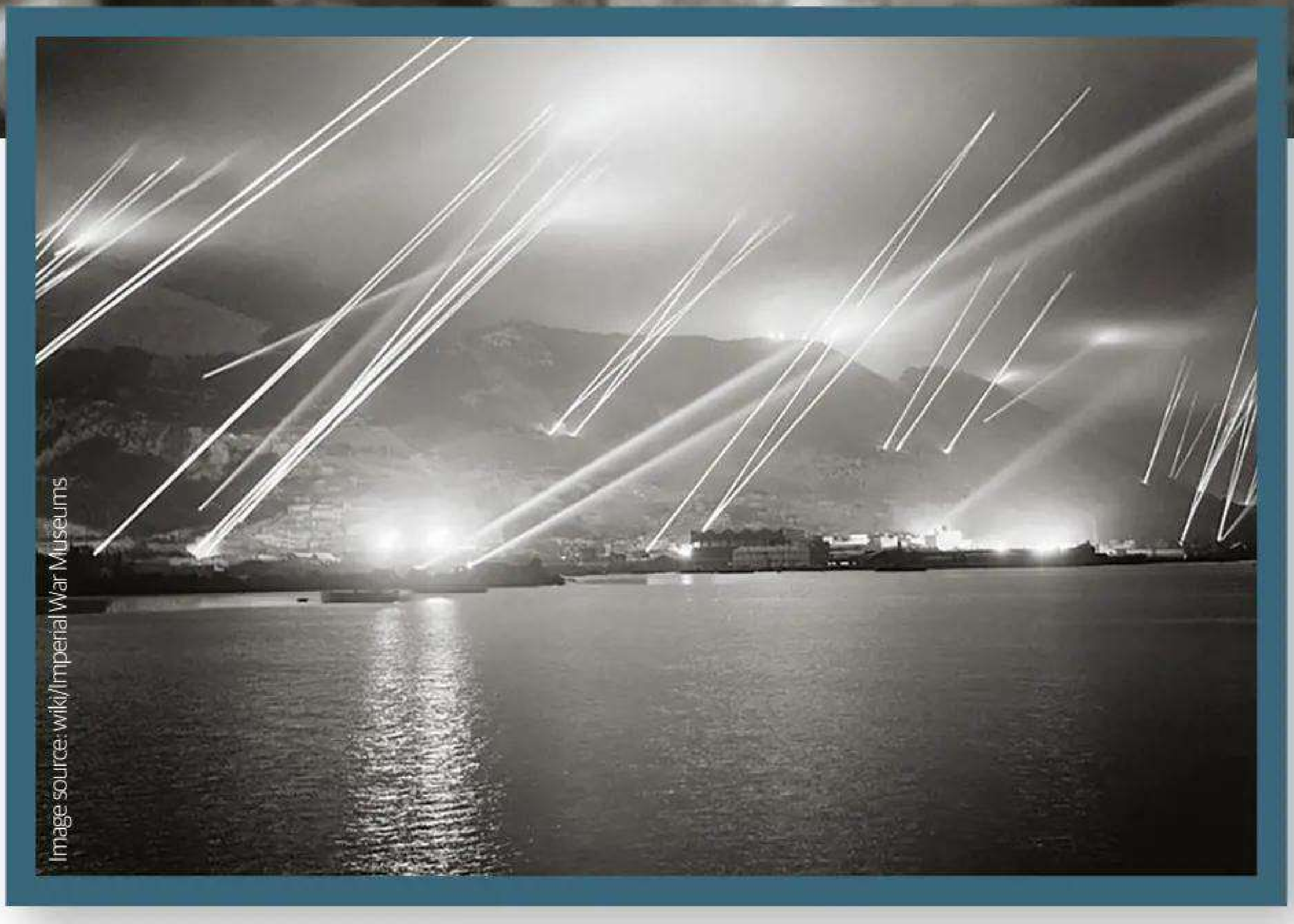


Image source: wiki/Imperial War Museums

art studio or at the very least working as a salesman at one. Crabb's natural charm would have made him perfect for such a job, but he was also known as an eccentric. He could often be seen strutting the streets wearing a monocle and carrying a distinctive sword stick with a silver crab-shaped handle.

However, Crabb still harboured a desire to see the world and never stayed in one place long. For a time he lived in China where he first dabbled in the murky world of espionage, spying on Soviet forces for Chinese nationalist leader Chiang Kai-Shek. But back in Europe, war was on the horizon. Crabb returned to England in 1940 only to be rejected from the Royal Navy due to poor eyesight. However, he was able to join up as an underwater bomb disposal officer and, after undergoing training, received his commission in 1941. Within a year Crabb was posted to the place that would make him a hero of the war – Gibraltar.

CRABB AT WAR

Located on the south coast of Spain, Gibraltar was the only remaining piece of Allied territory in mainland Europe. During the war Spain was technically neutral but under a fascist regime, it regularly provided covert support to both Nazi Germany and Mussolini's Italy. One problem the British Navy at Gibraltar faced was Italian underwater saboteurs based in the Spanish port of Algeciras. As much of Allied shipping was controlled and organised from Gibraltar, the harbour was an appealing target for the Italian frogmen. They attached limpet mines or manned torpedoes known as Chariots to the hulls of the waiting ships.

The mission of the Underwater Working Party, to which Crabb was attached, was to locate these explosives and neutralise them before they caused loss of life. The divers' gear however was limited. Instead of working with professional equipment, they had to rely on the Davis Submarine Escape Apparatus, which as the name implies was designed for use during emergencies onboard submarines. They had no wetsuits or fins, wearing swimming trunks and sports shoes with weights attached. What was worse, the team designated to retrieve the bombs consisted of only two divers.

Crabb's intended role was to dismantle the bombs once they were brought ashore. However, when he discovered the lack of manpower afforded to the Underwater Working Party, he realised he too would have to learn to dive. Despite having no prior diving experience, he was purportedly something of a natural. This was all the more miraculous because Crabb was a weak swimmer, barely able to complete three lengths of the average swimming pool.

Although Crabb's team never comprised more than six divers at any one time, they fought valiantly against the attackers. Despite the UWP's war with the Italians being a violent and bloody one, Crabb seems to have genuinely respected the enemy and viewed them as equals. At one point, two Italian divers were killed and their bodies brought to the surface. Crabb made sure they were given a full naval burial at sea. Although seen as a moving gesture by some, it frustrated and angered

ABOVE-INSET Gibraltar, where Crabb worked to protect the bay from Italian saboteurs, shown here lit up with searchlights

TOP-INSET When his work at Gibraltar was completed, Crabb was sent to Livorno and Venice in Italy to help clear the ports of mines and wreckage

> "THE SECRET INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (SIS, ALSO KNOWN AS MI6) IMMEDIATELY HATCHED A PLAN TO SEND A DIVER BELOW THE ORDZHONIKIDZE ON A RECONNAISSANCE MISSION"

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

others. However, alongside the bodies Crabb was also able to recover some useful equipment – including fins, which the British divers were still without.

But Crabb did not spend all his time in Gibraltar fighting off attacks from Italian frogmen. In 1943, the UWP were dispatched to recover the bodies and vital documents from a plane that had crashed shortly after take off. The plane had been carrying the Polish general Władysław Sikorski. His suspicious death has led to theories as to whether the Soviet Union, supposedly distrusting him, sought to have Sikorski liquidated. This is all the more believable due to the then director of British intelligence in Gibraltar being one Kim Philby, later revealed as a Soviet spy and one of the infamous Cambridge Five.

But for the moment all focus was on recovering the bodies and the all-important documents. Crabb's mission was an urgent one: not only was there the risk that the tide would interfere with the crash sight, there was the more pressing concern of enemy divers getting there first. Despite the mission's difficulty, Crabb made the UWP dive day and night until all 18 bodies, microfilm and documents were brought ashore.

Slowly, the Italian attacks became less frequent. According to the Welhams, the work of the Underwater Working Party and Lionel Crabb meant that the bay at Gibraltar was simply too well defended. Finally, on 8 September 1943 any fears of further attacks were abated when the Italian forces surrendered to the Allies. For his work in Gibraltar, Crabb was promoted to the position of Lieutenant Captain and awarded the George Medal. Crabb spent the final years of the war in Venice and Livorno, where he worked to clear the port of wrecks and explosives. He was decommissioned in 1947.

CIVILIAN DIVER

Crabb returned to civilian life and took a job as a furniture salesman. Yet the underwater world continued to hold a fascination and he regularly worked as a freelance diver. In the 1950s he helped hunt for the wreck of a Spanish galleon off the coast of Tobermory, Scotland enlisting the help of two Naval ships. Unfortunately, as Colin Martin and Geoffrey Parker state in their book *The Spanish Armada*, "the operation proved a fiasco that ended in awkward parliamentary questions about why taxpayers' money had been used to sponsor a private treasure hunt."

Crabb was also contacted by the Navy to help with more sombre operations. ▶

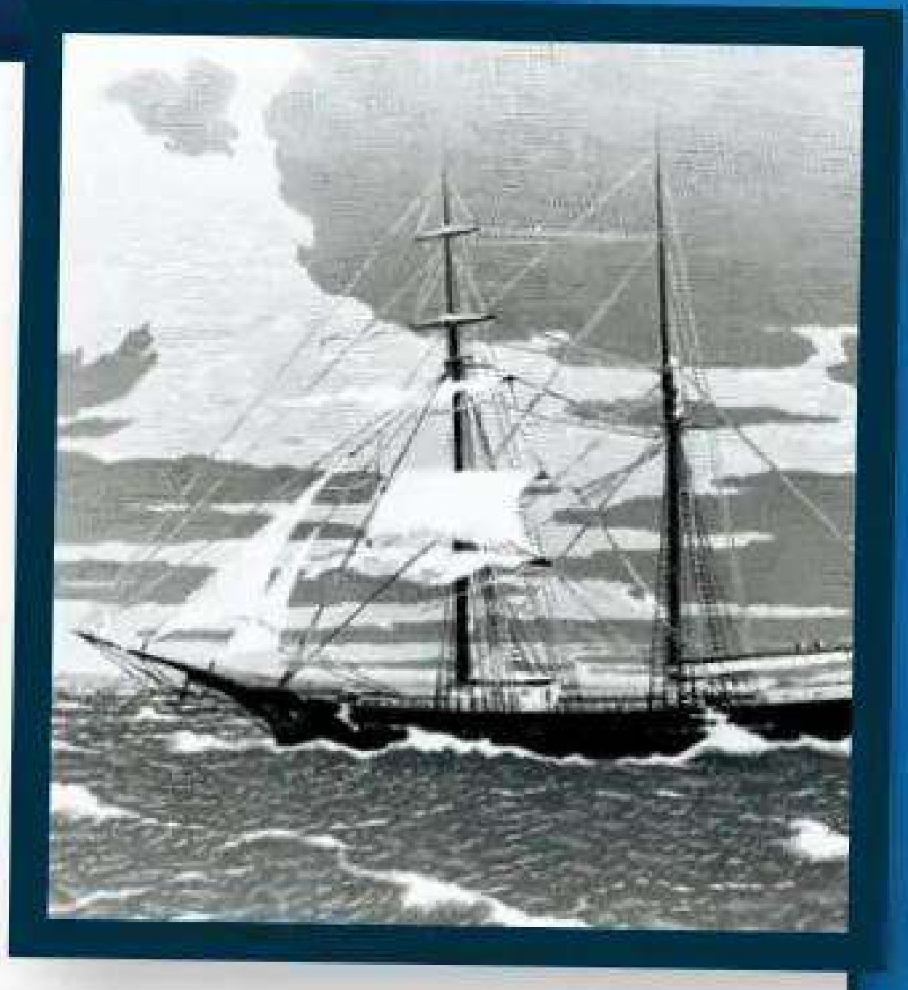
VANISHING ACTS

Lionel Crabb is not the only case of an unsolved disappearance from history, here are five famous examples

Amelia Earhart

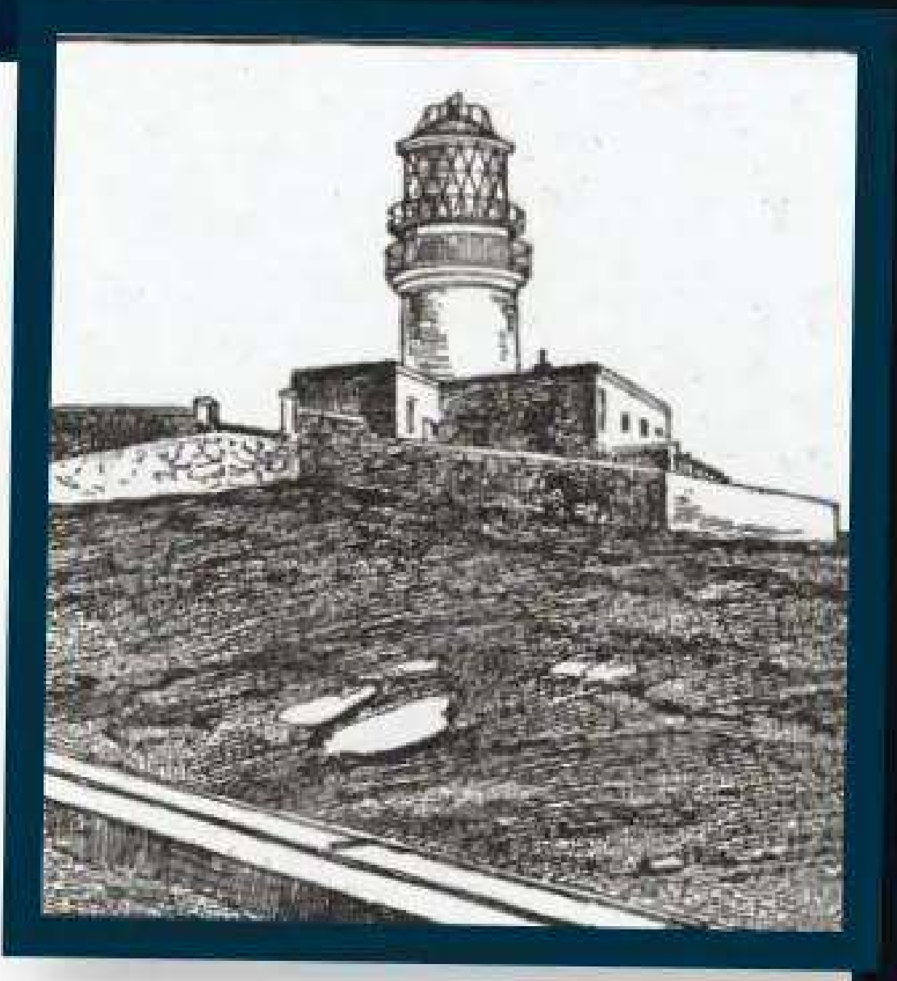
Famous for being the first woman to cross the Atlantic Ocean by plane and also the first to make a non-stop transatlantic flight, Amelia Earhart disappeared somewhere over the Pacific Ocean in 1937. It is suspected that, while attempting to complete an around-the-world flight, Earhart and her navigator were killed during a plane crash. However, while this is the most likely explanation, in the decades since there have been numerous conspiracy theories. According to the National Air and Space Museum, one claim is she was captured by the Japanese and forced to broadcast propaganda under the name 'Tokyo Rose' during World War II.

The Mary Celeste



On 5 December 1872, the Mary Celeste was discovered adrift at sea. When she was boarded, not a soul of her ten-person crew could be found. Unusually none of the crew's belongings had been taken, although one of the lifeboats had gone. There were also no signs of a struggle or emergency, however there were a few feet of water in the hold. In the century since her disappearance, the Mary Celeste has become arguably the most famous nautical vanishing.

Flannan Isles Lighthouse

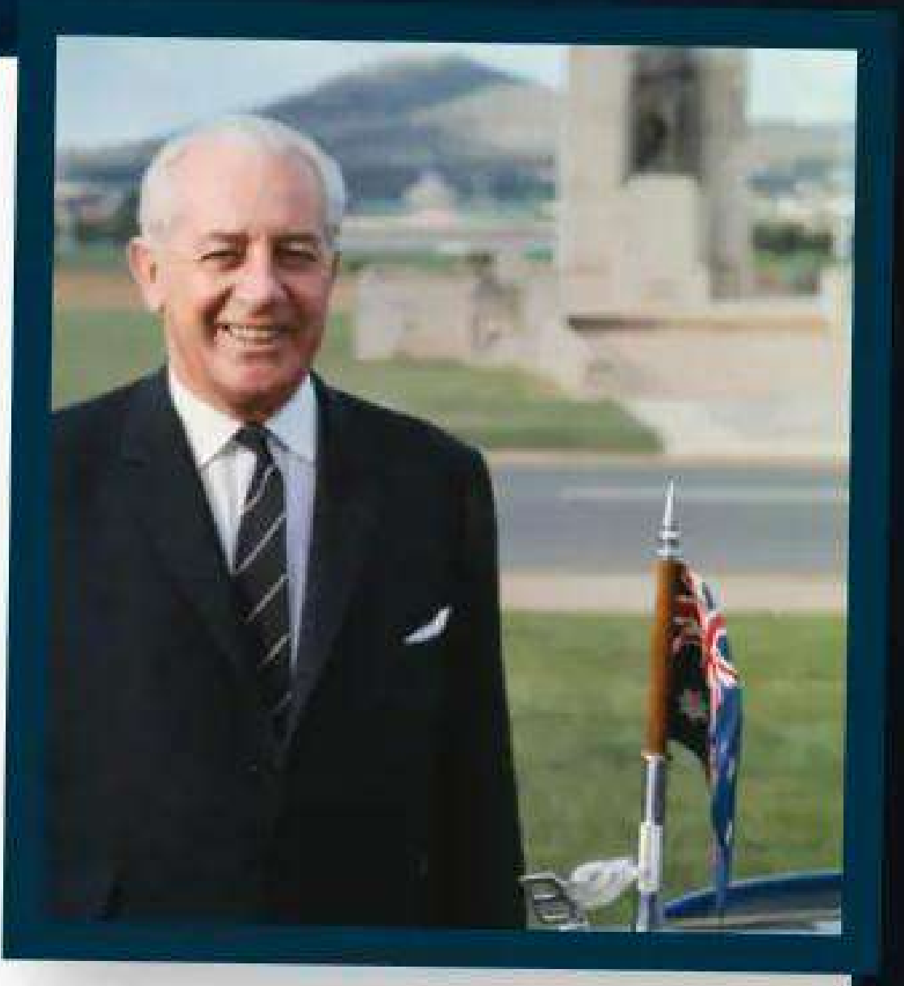


In December of 1900, Donald MacArthur, Thomas Marshall and James Ducat vanished from the lighthouse on Flannan Isles in the Outer Hebrides. Unusually, the log at the lighthouse complained of bad storms, yet no storms were recorded in this area. The door and gate were also locked and the beds were unmade. What happened on Flannan Isles remains a mystery and has inspired everything from a 2019 film, *The Vanishing*, to a 1970s episode of *Doctor Who*.

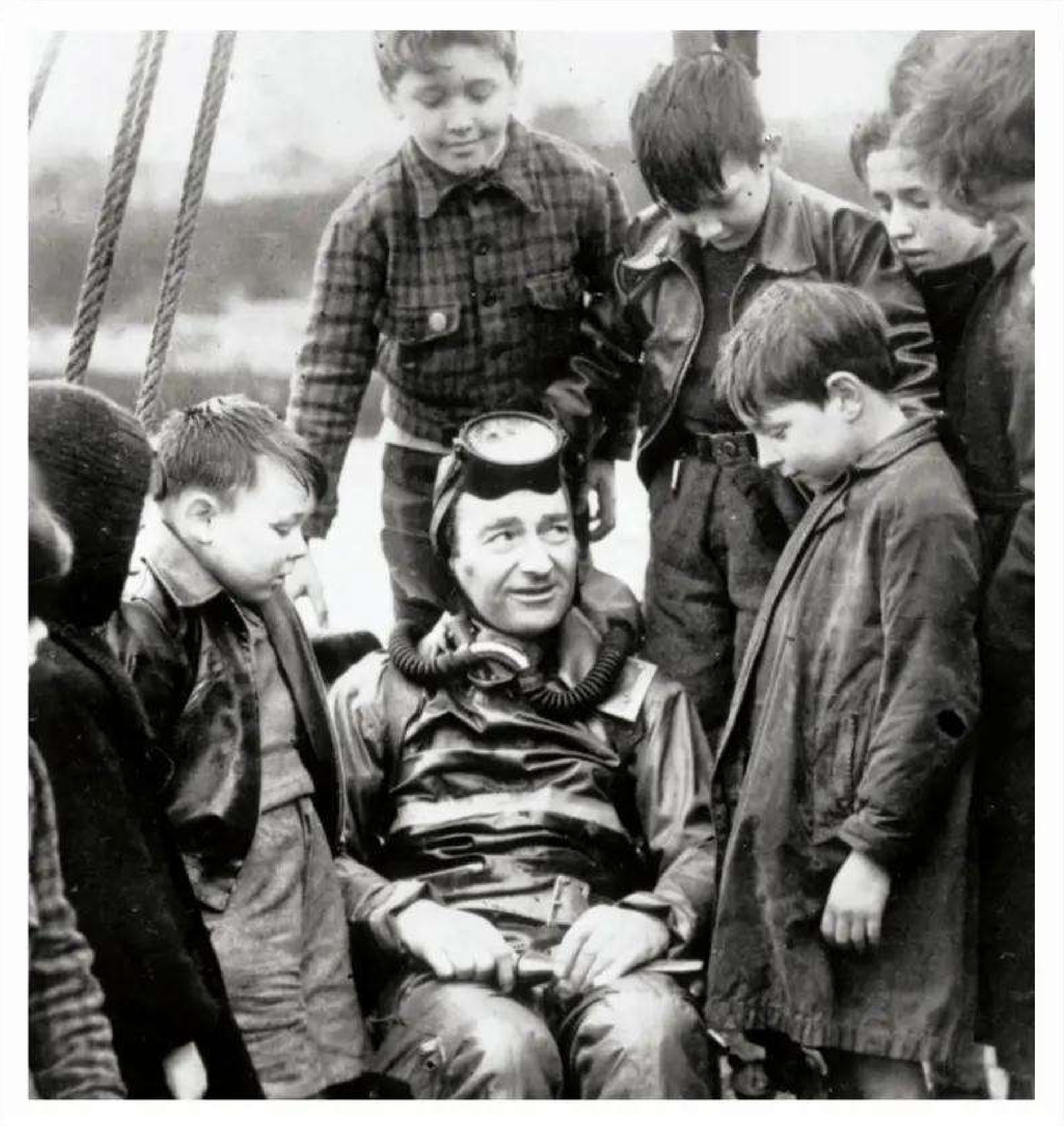
Joseph Force Crater

In 1930, Joseph Force Crater was appointed as a judge to the Supreme Court. However, a few short months later on the eve of 6 August, after having met two friends for dinner, he vanished off the face of the earth. His wife finally sounded the alarm when he did not return to their home in Maine after ten days. The story quickly captured the public imagination, and stories of the judge's mysterious behaviour in the days beforehand only added fuel to the fire.

Harold Holt



Surely one of the most high-profile historical disappearances is that of Australian prime minister Harold Holt, who disappeared having entered the water at Cheviot Beach in Victoria on 17 December 1967. To this day Holt's body has never been recovered. While some claim that the circumstances surrounding the prime minister's disappearance were unusual – and conspiracy theories emerged – it is likely that he drowned during a freak accident.



ABOVE-LEFT
Lionel Crabb recounts some of his adventures for a group of schoolboys when hunting for a Spanish galleon in Tobermory

ABOVE-MIDDLE
After the war Crabb worked as a freelance diver. Here he prepares to investigate an object off the coast of Hastings in 1953

ABOVE-RIGHT
The Sverdlov, the ship Lionel Crabb and Sydney Knowles were reported to have spied on in 1955

After the submarine Truculent collided with the Swedish tanker Divinia in the River Thames on 12 January 1950, Crabb participated in the investigatory missions. Similarly, he assisted in another recovery operation four years later when the submarine HMS Affray was lost in the English Channel on 16 April 1951.

But while these very high-profile dives were the ones the public were allowed to read about, Crabb also participated in more clandestine operations. In 1955 he was contacted by the British Intelligence Services and asked to undertake a mission diving beneath the Russian ship, the Sverdlov, which was docked in Portsmouth Harbour. Both the British Navy and the American CIA were interested in why the Sverdlov was so manoeuvrable. The operation was overseen by the CIA and Crabb and Sydney Knowles, a friend from Gibraltar, completed the job successfully. But a year later Crabb would find himself enlisted for another mission into the murky waters of Portsmouth Harbour, one from which he would never return.

LOST AT SEA

On 18 April 1956, the Soviet leaders Marshal Bulganin and Nikita Khrushchev arrived in Portsmouth for a rare goodwill visit during a brief relaxing of tensions in the Cold War. Flanked by a pair of warships, their cruiser the Ordzhonikidze greatly interested the British intelligence services. The Secret Intelligence Service (SIS, also known as MI6) immediately hatched a plan to send a diver below the Ordzhonikidze on a reconnaissance mission. But the waters of Portsmouth Harbour were a dangerous place to dive, with little visibility combined with the hazard of ships entering and exiting the busy port. For this job, they needed an experienced man, but who?

Lionel Crabb had recently turned 47. While still a highly respected war hero, in many ways his best years were behind him. His health was poor and he drank and smoked to excess. Nonetheless, perhaps seeking to relive his glory days, Crabb eagerly agreed to the job and arrived at Portsmouth on 17 April. After contacting an ex-colleague from the war to act as a diving partner, the pair carried out a test dive on the 18th. However, Professor Christopher R Moran states in his book *Classified: Secrecy And The State In Modern Britain* that Crabb followed this with a heavy drinking spree in nearby Havant. Showing little respect for the secrecy of the operation, Crabb is said to have informed several locals of his plans and others recognised his distinctive crab-handled sword stick.

The next morning, just before 7am, Crabb embarked on his mission. He returned just once to adjust his weights. With enough oxygen to last him 90 minutes, by 9.15, it was clear that Crabb was not coming back. At some point before 8am the crew of one of the Russian warships, the Sovershenny, saw a diver surface, clearly in great distress. Interestingly, the admiral who reported this story, Rear Admiral V F Kotov, claimed that this had occurred on the 18th and not the 19th. Made directly to the British

DON'T CALL ME BUSTER

Why Lionel Crabb hated being compared to the American star known for playing Flash Gordon

During World War II, Crabb earned the nickname 'Buster' after the film star Buster Crabbe. The actor had become known for playing the space-adventurer Flash Gordon in a number of 1930s serials, as well as other pulp heroes including Buck Rogers and Tarzan. Whereas Lionel Crabb was short and stocky, Buster Crabbe was tall and athletic. Furthermore, Buster Crabbe was also an Olympic swimmer where Lionel Crabb's swimming ability was weak. Likely feeling mocked by the comparison, Lionel Crabb himself was not fond of the nickname, threatening to deliver a swift punch to anyone who referred to him as 'Buster'.

American actor and Olympic swimmer Buster Crabbe, the inspiration behind Lionel's nickname

ABOVE The Davis Submarine Escape Apparatus, used by the Underwater Working Party in Gibraltar, is tested in 1942

> "WITH THE RELEVANT FILES STILL UNDER EMBARGO, IT'S LIKELY THAT THERE IS STILL MUCH TO LEARN ABOUT THE CRABB AFFAIR"

prime minister, Anthony Eden, at a state dinner, it's likely that this claim was a less-than-subtle hint of Russian knowledge of the operation. The only problem was, that while the Russians had been aware of it, the British prime minister had not.

In the corridors of Whitehall, tensions were high. Anthony Eden was furious as he had made it clear that no intelligence operations were to be carried out during the Russians' visit. The fact that the mission had gone ahead without ministerial approval or knowledge only served to increase his anger. According to Gov.uk, even news of Crabb's disappearance was not immediately communicated to ministers as various intelligence departments desperately sought to pass blame. As a result of this embarrassment, the then head of the SIS known as 'C' retired. The circumstances surrounding Crabb's disappearance were kept secret, the public informed that the Lieutenant Commander had vanished while testing underwater apparatus in Portsmouth Harbour.

WHAT HAPPENED TO COMMANDER CRABB?

In June 1957, over a year after Crabb's disappearance, a body clothed in diving gear was discovered by a group of fishermen near Chichester Harbour in Sussex. Disturbingly, the body had no head and no hands but the local coroner was unable to determine whether these injuries were the cause of death or not. Although attempts to positively identify the discovered body proved inconclusive, an inquest declared that it was indeed Lionel Crabb and on 6 July, the body was laid to rest in Portsmouth.

Surely then, this was the end of the story? Lieutenant-Commander Crabb's remains had at last been found, even if the circumstances of his death remained a mystery. There was just one problem – very few people were convinced that the headless corpse buried in Portsmouth was Lionel Crabb. Neither Crabb's ex-wife nor his girlfriend could provide positive identification and the verdict seems to have been entirely based on Sydney Knowles' assertion that both Crabb and the body had a similar scar on the left knee.

There was also the mystery of what exactly happened that fateful morning. One theory is that Crabb's poor health and the previous night's binge affected him during the dive. If he ran into trouble, he may have been taken aboard the Ordzhonikidze where he simply died. Author Nigel West, the pen name for former British MP Rupert Allason, stated in *Spycraft Secrets: An Espionage A-Z* that the night before, Crabb suffered a minor heart attack but went ahead with the dive nonetheless. However, author MS Goodman in his 2008 paper, *A Cold War Cover Up: The Buster Crabbe Affair*, claimed that it was another officer with Crabb who suffered the heart attack.

Another theory is that he was caught and executed. When CIA officer Tennent H Bagley helped write the memoirs of KGB operative Sergey A Kondrashev, he was surprised when Kondrashev claimed prior awareness of Crabb's mission – suggesting a possible mole. What the KGB officer did with this information, and more importantly with Crabb, he did not reveal. In 2007 Eduard Koltsov, a Russian ex-frogman, claimed that he had been waiting for Crabb and, after catching him in the process of attaching what appeared to be a limpet mine to the Ordzhonikidze, cut his throat.

But others have been far less convinced of Crabb's demise, believing that he successfully defected or was taken by the Russian security services and brainwashed. The journalist Bernard Hutton believed that Crabb had defected and was now an officer in the Soviet Navy. Hutton even had a photograph of the man he believed to be Lionel Crabb. However, author Don Hale, while acknowledging that some family members believed this tale, states that "few others did".

With the relevant files still under embargo, it's likely that there is still much to learn about the Crabb affair. Recently, historian Giles Milton explored the mystery in the first series of his podcast *Cover Up*. In one episode fellow historian Andrew Lownie claimed that Lord Mountbatten, as head of the Navy, must have had knowledge of the operation. Is this the reason for the extraordinary secrecy? Perhaps we will never know. Meanwhile, the files continue to sit in the National Archives, their contents waiting to be revealed. However, Crabb deserves to be remembered for more than just his disappearance, but rather for his past as a war hero, an expert diver, and a one of a kind. There'll never be another Lionel "Buster" Crabb. ○

BELOW The 1958 film *The Silent Enemy* featured a dramatisation of Crabb and his team's dive to recover important documents from General Sikorski's crashed plane

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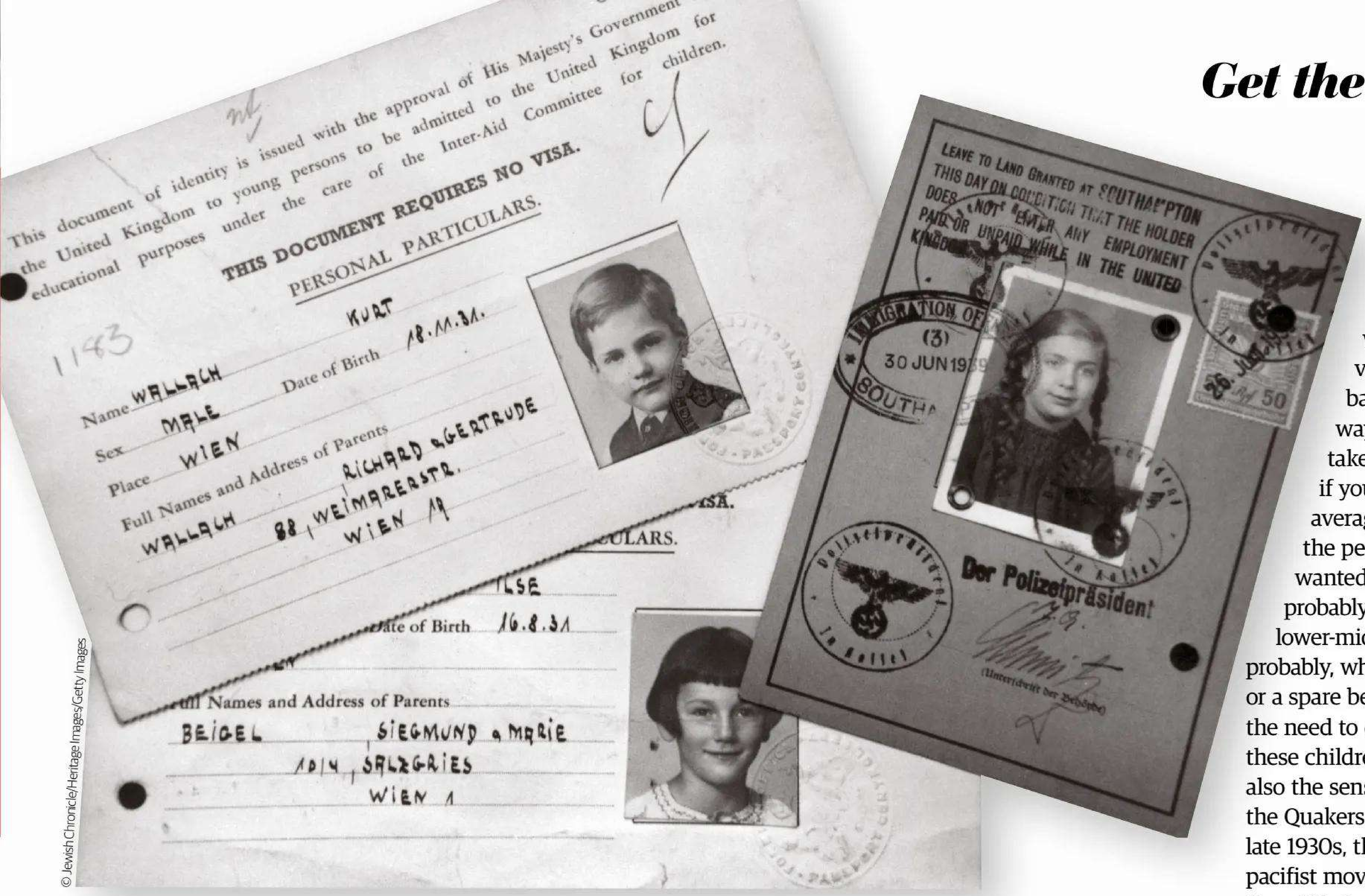
GET THE CHILDREN OUT!

Mike Levy reveals the story of the 10,000 Jewish children rescued from the clutches of the Nazis

Interview by Jonathan Gordon

EXPERT BIO

Mike Levy has many years of experience as an educator specialising in the Holocaust. He holds a fellowship with the Imperial War Museum and runs history projects for schools to educate children on Holocaust history.



This document of identity is issued with the approval of His Majesty's Government the United Kingdom to young persons to be admitted to the United Kingdom for educational purposes under the care of the Inter-Aid Committee for children.

THIS DOCUMENT REQUIRES NO VISA.

PERSONAL PARTICULARS.

1143

Name WALLACH KURT

Date of Birth 18.11.31.

Sex MALE

Place WIEN

Full Names and Address of Parents

WALLACH RICHARD & GERTRUDE

88, WEIMARERSTR.

WIEN 19

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ate of Birth 16.8.31

ull Names and Address of Parents

BEIGEL SIEGMUND & MARIE

10/14, SALZGRIES

WIEN 1

LEAVE TO LAND GRANTED AT SOUTHAMPTON THIS DAY ON CONDITION THAT THE HOLDER DOES NOT ENTER ANY EMPLOYMENT PAID OR UNPAID WHILE IN THE UNITED KINGD

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Der Polizeipräsident

(Unterschrift der Behörde)

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ABOVE Documents for three children who were brought from Austria to Britain to escape the Nazis

Starting in 1938 after the November pogroms, known as Kristallnacht, and going right up to the invasion of Poland in September 1939, a concerted and organised effort was made to get children of persecuted families, mostly Jewish, out of Germany. Their rescue from Nazi-controlled areas likely saved them from even worse actions to come from Hitler's regime. But who were the men and women who helped to shepherd these children out of Germany, and who took them in? That's what Mike Levy explores in his book, *Get the Children Out!: Unsung Heroes of the Kindertransport*. We caught up with him to learn more about this story.

How did the Kindertransport rescue effort to begin in 1938 and how involved was the British government in setting it up?

First of all, the government didn't fund the Kindertransport in any shape or form. It was completely aloof from the fundraising part of the rescue and made it very clear from the word go that no taxpayer's money would be used to support these children. For the Kindertransport, we're talking about around 10,000 children, 90 per cent of whom were Jewish. These children came between the beginning of December 1938 and the end of August to the very, very beginning of September 1939. And in those eight months about 10,000 children came over unaccompanied. They were not allowed to bring their family or their parents with them. Initially, they were up to the age of 17, but then that was lowered a little bit into the spring of 1939 down to 16. What the government did was provide visa-free travel, a visa waiver scheme, you might call it, to allow the children to come without formal documents to enter the country. They had documents, but they were much easier to obtain without going through the lengthy and laborious process of receiving a visa. But the caveats were very much that the scheme had to be run by volunteers, it had to be financed by them, homes and hostels and all the means of welfare had to be provided by voluntary efforts and not by the government.

What were the backgrounds of the people involved in this mission? Did they have any history in activism or political movements?

There was a wide spectrum. At one end there were people who had been politically aware and involved in anti-fascist, anti-Nazi rallies and peace campaigns. There were certainly some parliamentarians who I mention in the book, who had been lobbying the government to allow at least the children to escape, if not to Britain to at least the British Empire, which was a very large swathe of the world. It then went down across the board from people who heard about the terrible things going on in Germany, being asked by their priests and vicars or their rabbis, 'can something be done to provide homes or help these children?' down to people who simply thought that it was the right thing to do. They were the grocer, the housewife, the next door neighbour, the teacher. I would say probably there was a very wide spectrum right across the social classes with probably a bit of bias towards the middle class. This was not because the working-class people in Britain didn't want to help, but because very significant financial barriers were put in the way of those wanting to take in the children. So, if you wanted to take an average of who they were, the people who took in or wanted to help, they would probably be British families, lower-middle-class families probably, who had a spare room or a spare bed in a room and felt the need to do something to help these children. I think there was also the sense among people like the Quakers – and remember in the late 1930s, there was a very strong pacifist movement – that although they didn't advocate war against Hitler and against the fascists, they could alleviate the suffering of those who were having to live in those countries. So, I think there's quite an interestingly broad spectrum, from political to apolitical, and from relatively well off to really quite humble in income.

How connected and organised were the different stages of the escape process?

Well, if you think the pogroms took place on 9 and 10 November 1938 and the first 200 children of the Kindertransport, the vanguard if you like, arrived three weeks later, on 2 December, that is remarkable. Really in December 1938, which is the first month of the Kindertransport, there was something like 1,500-2,000 of those 10,000 children that arrived. So, as you can imagine, a lot of the organisation ▶

BELOW Otto Busch sits for breakfast with his carers, Mr and Mrs Guest. Mr Guest was a lorry driver

All images: © Getty Images

was ad hoc. People were very much learning by experience and trial and error about how to do this. Having said that, it's not totally right to say that there was no expertise whatsoever, because there was. On the German end of the organisations, particularly the Jewish, Quaker, and to a certain extent Protestant church, they already had organisations and processes in place to help get people out of Germany; people who might be pursued by the Gestapo or Jews who wanted to get out and start a new life somewhere else like possibly Palestine or America or wherever it might be. So, there were processes in place to put these children on trains and get them out, but it was a lot of seat-of-pants thinking, a lot of bleary-eyed, 24-hour, almost panic-driven work going on both at the Berlin, Vienna, Hamburg, Frankfurt end, and also at the London, Cardiff, Glasgow and Manchester end as well. It was very large and slightly chaotic at the beginning, but things started to settle in the early months of 1939 especially when money got much, much tighter to help support these children. I think there was much more professionalisation of the organisation, certainly at the London end.

What opposition did these rescue efforts face from Nazi authorities?

Well, interestingly, at this point in what we might call the Holocaust era, the Nazi attitude to its Jewish population had three elements to it; isolation, impoverishment, and expulsion. So, we're very much still in the expulsion stage in 1938 where they didn't want to stand in the way of Jews leaving the country, providing they didn't leave with any money and left the Nazi authorities with as much wealth as they could get their hands on. So, the only thing that stood in the way of the children leaving was there was an awful lot of German Nazi paperwork and bureaucracy, because they had to have the right documents, the right health certificates. I even read somewhere that in some places they had to show the authorities the bit of paper that said that they were exempt from joining the Hitler Youth, which would be ironic if it wasn't so tragic. There were all sorts of bits of paperwork that were put into place quickly to satisfy the German bureaucracy and of course, similarly, there was lots of paperwork in London because it wasn't a completely open door for any child who wants to leave and come to Britain.

"PEOPLE WERE VERY MUCH LEARNING BY EXPERIENCE AND TRIAL AND ERROR ABOUT HOW TO DO THIS"

TOP 250 refugees arrived in Southampton on 24 March 1939, 88 of whom were unaccompanied children

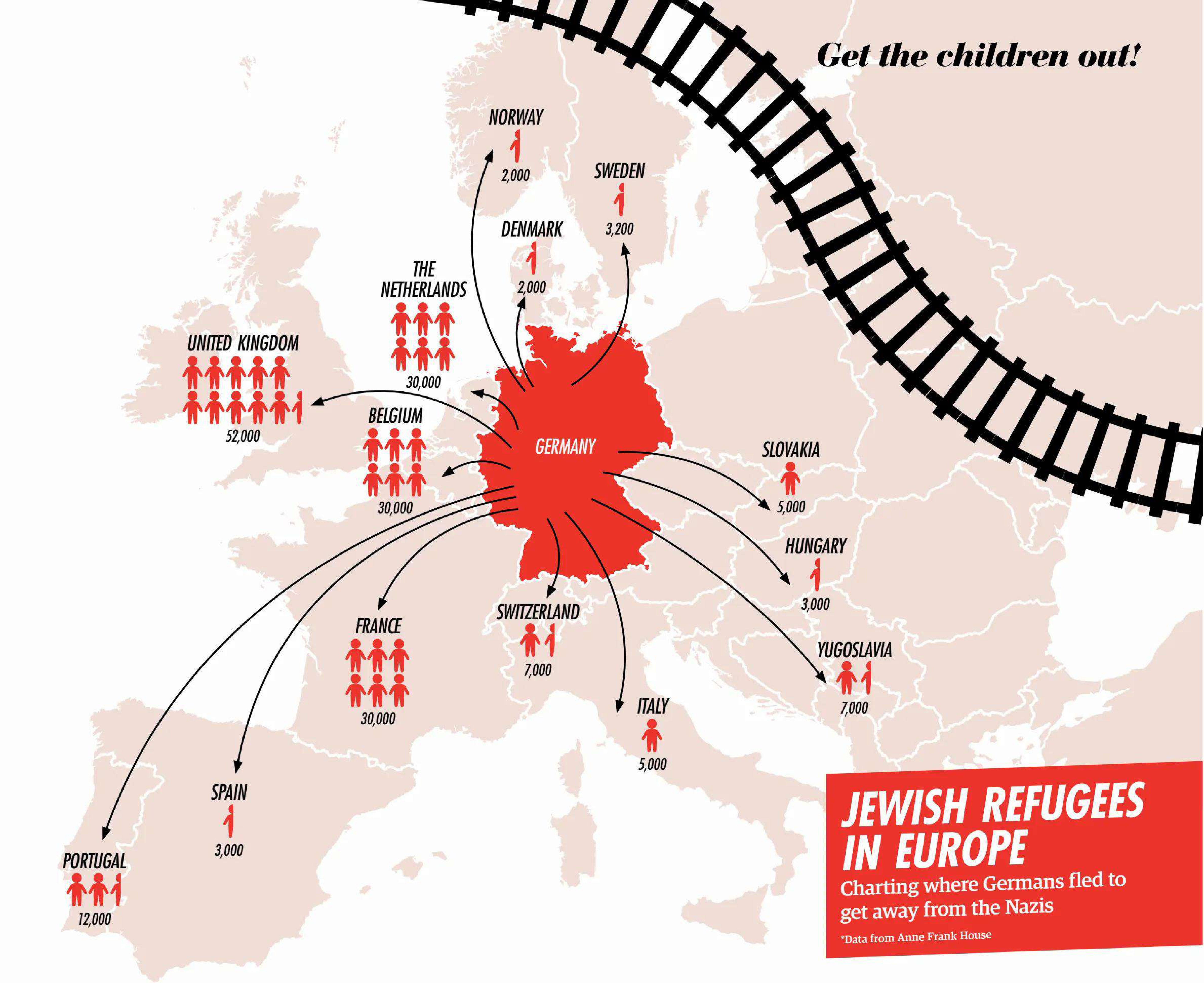
ABOVE Dovercourt Bay camp was set up to receive refugee children when they arrived at Harwich, Essex

ABOVE-RIGHT Children were given identity tags, but didn't need extensive papers to gain entry to Britain

LEFT Three children settling down for the evening at the Dovercourt Bay camp

The beginning of hostilities from September 1939 brought the Kindertransport programme to an end. Did those on the ground continue their activities though?

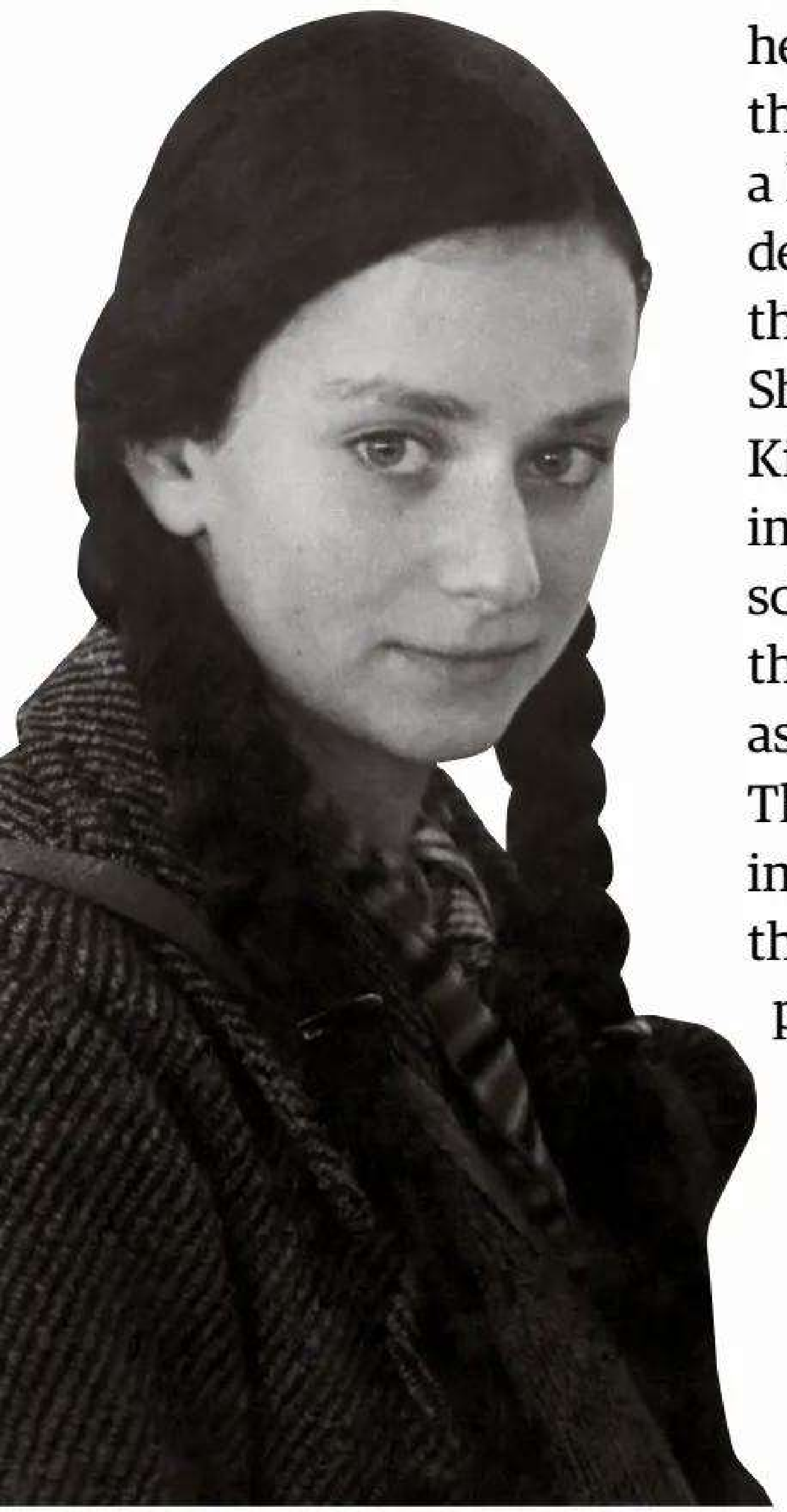
The last train leaving Germany arrived in England on 1 September. On that day Germany declared war on Poland and all borders were closed. There were no further train Kindertransports coming out of Germany. There was a small, unofficial Kindertransport of about 70 children leaving the Netherlands in May 1940. I tell the story in the book (*Get the Children Out!: Unsung Heroes of the Kindertransport*) of how that happened and how the ship left the docks in the ports in the Netherlands on the very day that the Germans were invading the country. It was a desperate act to get the children out while they could. During the war itself, it was not possible to get children out of continental Europe.



JEWISH REFUGEES IN EUROPE

Charting where Germans fled to get away from the Nazis

*Data from Anne Frank House



BELOW A German-Jewish girl who arrived at Dovercourt Bay camp, near Harwich in Essex, in 1938

Are there any of these volunteers whose story you would want to highlight in terms of what they did post-war?

I call them unsung heroes in my book, and I think that they're all my unsung heroes, but there were certainly some that did have a post-war life. For instance, a lady called Bertha Bracey who was the de facto head of the Society of Friends, the Quakers, in Britain since the 1930s. She was very active in getting the whole Kindertransport scheme off the ground in 1938 and helping find foster homes, schools, training camps and so on for the children and then looking after them as much as they could through the war. The Quakers had a very fine reputation in terms of Kindertransport aid. After the war, Bertha Bracey joined an effort to provide relief and sustenance to Germans in Germany who were displaced, lost their homes through Allied bombing, were starving, and were in desperate straits. Interestingly, even during the war, Bertha was one of the very few people who received an OBE or any kind of recognition for her work for refugees in 1942.

Another interesting post-war figure was the rabbi Dr Solomon Schonfeld, who was a very larger than life character who brought out many hundreds of Orthodox boys and girls from Vienna before the war, campaigned during the war to try and rescue more, and it's quite remarkable the schemes he came up with. But after the war, like Bertha Bracey, he set up a relief organisation with mobile synagogues, which were essentially vans that had been converted into part synagogue and part relief ambulances. They were sent out to try and find Jewish boys and girls, particularly young people who had survived the camps, were in Displaced Persons (DP) camps or, in his way of thinking, languishing in unfriendly foster homes, maybe people who didn't share their religious backgrounds and so on. So he's a remarkable figure.

What do we know about the experience of the children who escaped, and how many of them were able to return home, reunite with their families or build new lives for themselves elsewhere?

We don't really have firm research figures on how many stayed and how many left. However, there was a survey done in 2007 by The Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR), which had about 1,400-1,500 respondents. So, it was quite a solid piece of research. First of all, there were very, very few, possibly only a handful, who went back to Germany. I know of very few who went back to East Germany because of their political sympathies with the newly arrived communist government in East Berlin, but that was pretty rare. ▶

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I would say probably the vast majority, 70-80 per cent of the children who came, stayed in Britain and naturalised under the 1947 naturalisation act.

In terms of their experience when they were here, again it's hard to say, but the research I've done shows, as you might expect, a lot depended on the families that they were fostered by. In some cases, they were incredibly lucky and the foster families were warm, sympathetic, and cared for them as their own children. Again, in the book, I've got many examples of that. There were other cases where the children, particularly older children, were exploited as unpaid servants. And there were definitely cases where children had been abused, both physically and sexually. So again, there's a range I think, depending very much on where the children ended up.

Frequently we see polling and data that suggests falling understanding or knowledge of the Holocaust among young people as we get further away from the event. What do you think we can and should be doing to remedy that?

In my time I've done quite a lot of teaching and educating in schools on Holocaust subjects and you can bring the subject to life first, through a very strong personal story and second, a story that has some local connection. So, for instance, if you think of the 10,000 children who came in without their parents and had to live a life away from their home because of Nazi persecution, those 10,000 children were scattered across the country. Probably anywhere where a reader, a child or a school is situated will have someone that had some link to the Holocaust living nearby; a Kindertransportee, a Jewish refugee, or a rescuer or someone who fought in the army that liberated Belsen, or was a political activist in that period and trying to do more to help refugees, and so on. It's been 80 years now; it's both something that happened a long way away in imagination and a long time ago. If you can bring that closer in, through personal stories and personal stories that have a local resonance, I think that's the way forward. There's a lot of thinking being done by Holocaust Education Trust, which I'm an educator with, and the Association of Jewish Refugees and others to focus on local history that can also take in global history. What impact does global history have on local history? I think that has potential.

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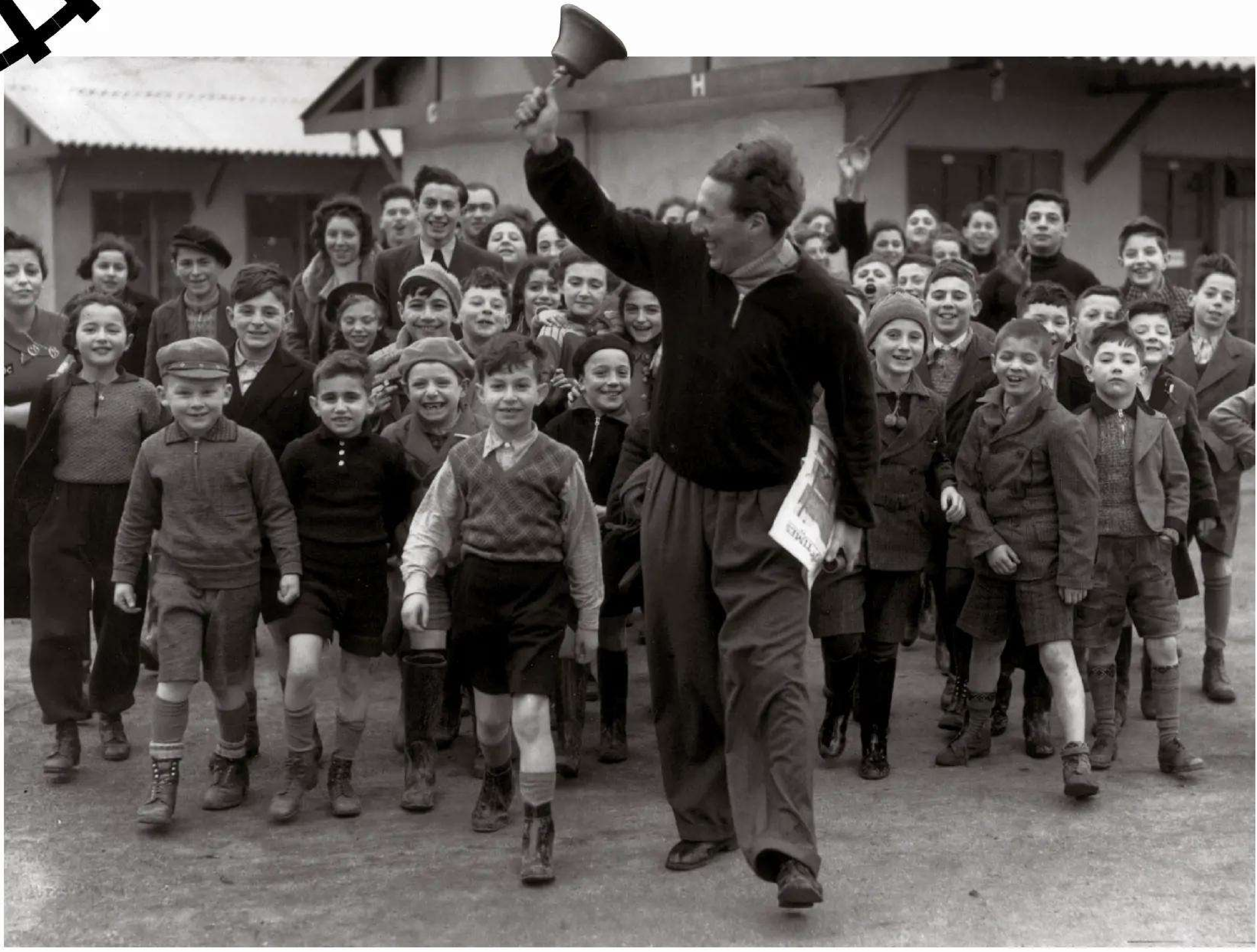


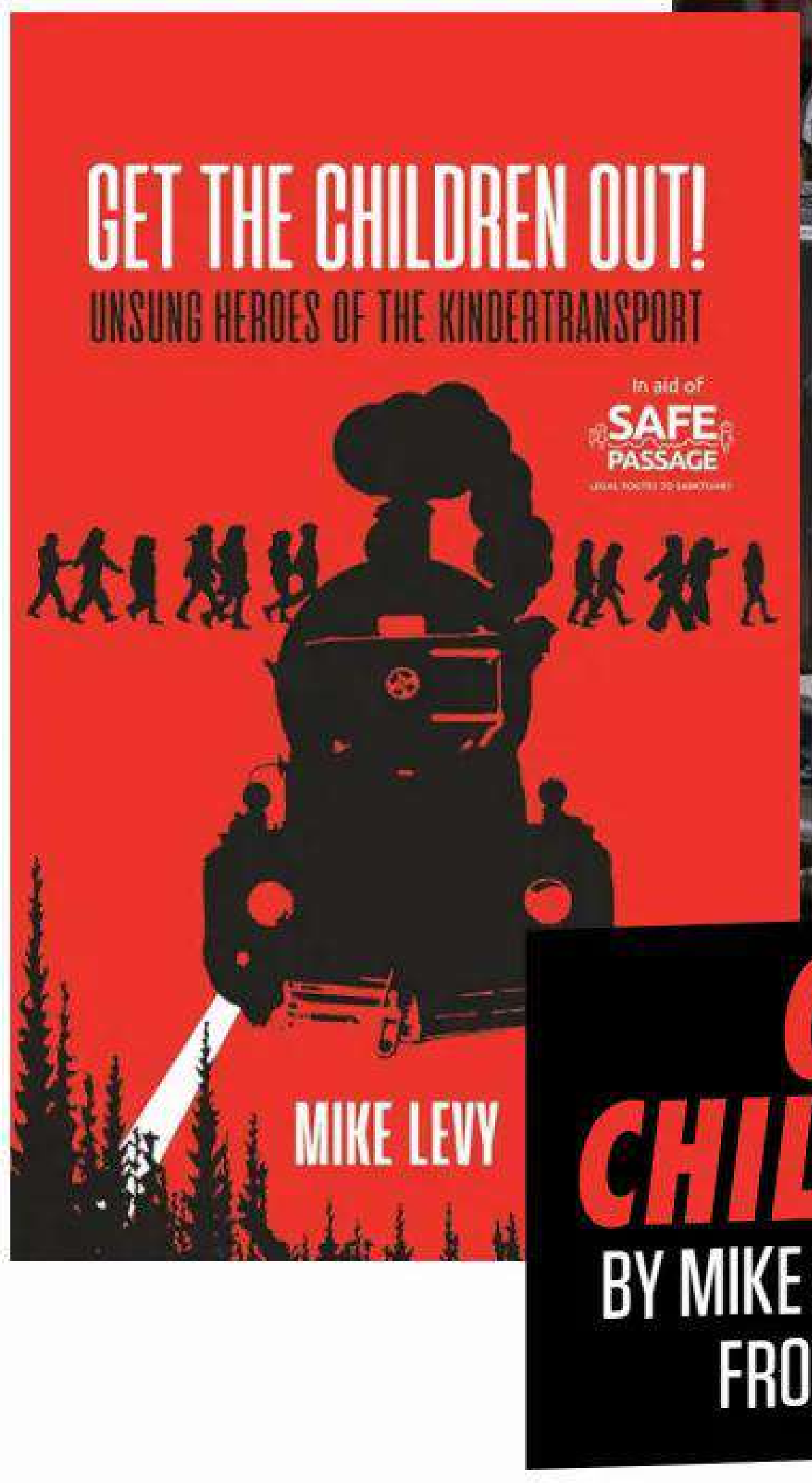
> "THE QUAKERS HAD A VERY FINE REPUTATION IN TERMS OF KINDERTRANSPORT AID"

ABOVE Dovercourt Bay camp belonged to the Butlins Company and was originally a holiday camp. It was the clearing station before the children were found more permanent homes

RIGHT A bronze statue outside Liverpool Street Station in London titled *Kindertransport – The Arrival* by Israeli sculptor Frank Meisler

© Daniel Leal/AFP via Getty Images

ABOVE 8-year-old Josepha Salmon who arrived at Harwich from Germany on 2 December 1938



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AMAZING WOMEN

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FRIDA KAHLO

How this icon of art survived near-death to become a revolutionary figure

Written by Arisa Loomba

Frida Kahlo was one of the most important artists of the 20th century, and her popularity continues to grow. She is the subject of blockbuster exhibitions across the world, her work sells at record-breaking prices, and in almost every museum shop you are likely to find an item of merchandise with her striking face on it. Her raw, intimate and fearless artworks and her life story, marked by disability and a dramatic love life, keep resonating with new audiences. A rebel of her time, she transgressed normative rules about gender, sexuality and artistic genius. Today she is a role model for the feminist movement, LGBTQ+ community, the Chicano Movement, among others.

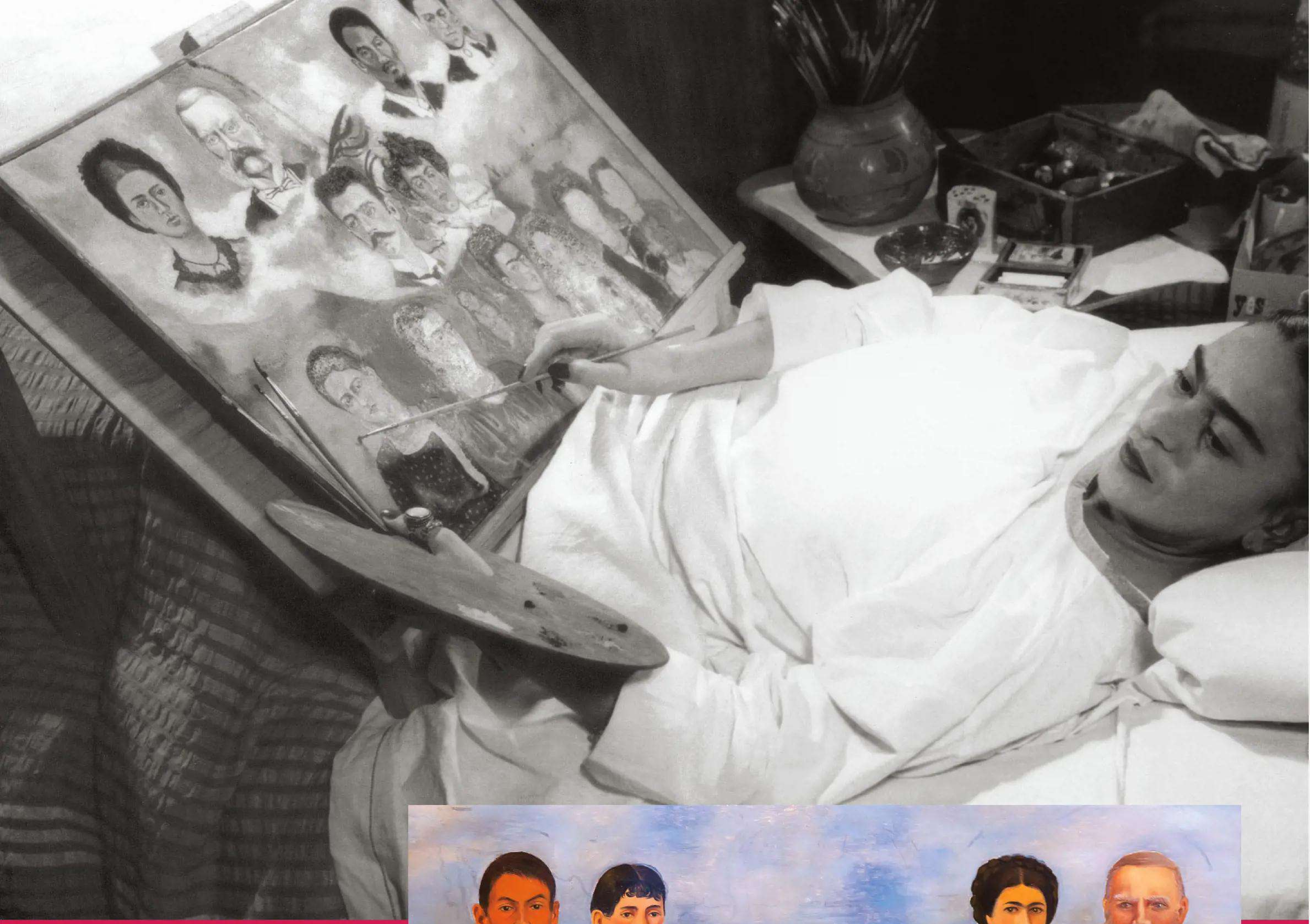
MAKING OF AN ARTIST

Kahlo was born Magdalena Carmen Frieda Kahlo y Calderon in 1907 to a Hungarian-German Jewish photographer Guillermo (originally Wilhelm before immigrating to Mexico), and mestiza (Spanish and Purépecha) Matilde Calderón de Kahlo. She grew up in the family home Casa Azul (The Blue House) in Coyoacán in Mexico City.

Although her father was a respectable photographer and was part of the intellectual bohemian milieu in Mexico City, it was not on the cards that the young Frida was likely to become an artistic icon, creating over 200 artworks. At the age of six, Frida contracted polio, which damaged her right leg leaving it shorter and thinner than her left. As she continued to grow, the damage created an imbalance in her pelvis and a curvature of her spine. At the age of 15, Frida Kahlo was one of 35 girls out of 2,000 students who were accepted to the very prestigious Escuela Nacional Preparatoria with the plan to study medicine.

Only three years later, she was part of a near-fatal bus accident on her way home from school – a tramcar drove into the bus, where she was a ►

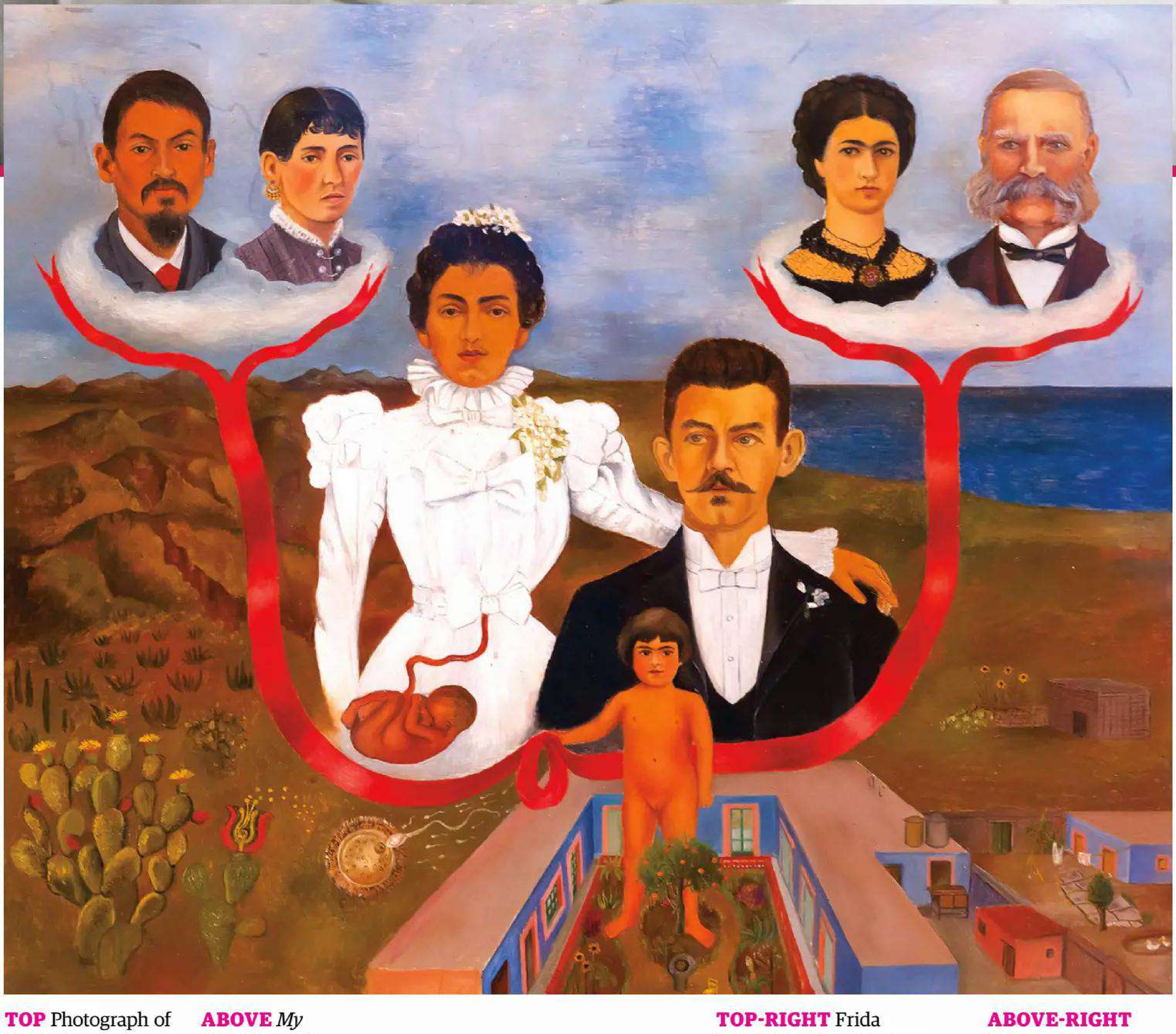
Frida Kahlo



passenger. An iron handrail pierced her left hip and exited through her pelvic outlet. Her clavicle, ribs, spine, elbow and leg were severely fractured and her ankles and shoulders were dislocated. She was not expected to survive, but she did.

However, her dream of becoming a doctor was crushed. While recovering from her many injuries in bed, Frida started to paint. She recalls telling her mother, "I'm still alive and besides I have something to live for, and that something is painting." Unable to move, her mother fixed an easel and a mirror to the canopy of her bed and she painted with her right arm while white straps around her chin and head pulled her towards the bed frame. This make-do setup was the unusual beginning of her career as an artist.

During the 1930s Kahlo continued to paint more and more. In 1938 she had the first one-woman show at the prestigious Julien Levy Gallery on New York's elegant 57th Street. The exhibition showcased 25 paintings. Alongside her artistic career, she underwent at least 30 orthopaedic and other operations, with most of them being unsuccessful and for periods encased in metal or plaster corsets over the course



TOP Photograph of Frida Kahlo as she paints at her easel in bed

ABOVE *My Grandparents, My Parents, and I (Family Tree),* 1936

TOP-RIGHT Frida Kahlo (right) and sisters photographed by their father Guillermo Kahlo in 1916

ABOVE-RIGHT Frida's parents, Guillermo Kahlo and Matilde Calderón

> “WHILE RECOVERING FROM HER MANY INJURIES IN BED, FRIDA STARTED TO PAINT”

of her life. Despite her suffering, she continued to work as an artist and kept an energetic and admirable determination for the rest of her life.

Her relationship to her body and everything it had gone through was the subject of multiple self-portraits. One of the most poignant is *The Broken Column* (1944, oil on Masonite). Completed shortly after a spinal surgery 20 years after the bus crash, she paints herself as pierced through with nails all over her naked body. She depicts her spine as a broken column only held together by bandages across her body. She stares right back at the viewer as she cries big white rain drops of tears, unafraid to show the harrowing chronic pain that she had to endure all her life.

DIEGO RIVERA

“I have suffered two serious accidents in my life. One in which a streetcar ran over me… The other accident is Diego.” Such was Kahlo’s own assessment of her tumultuous relationship with her husband and fellow artist Diego Rivera.

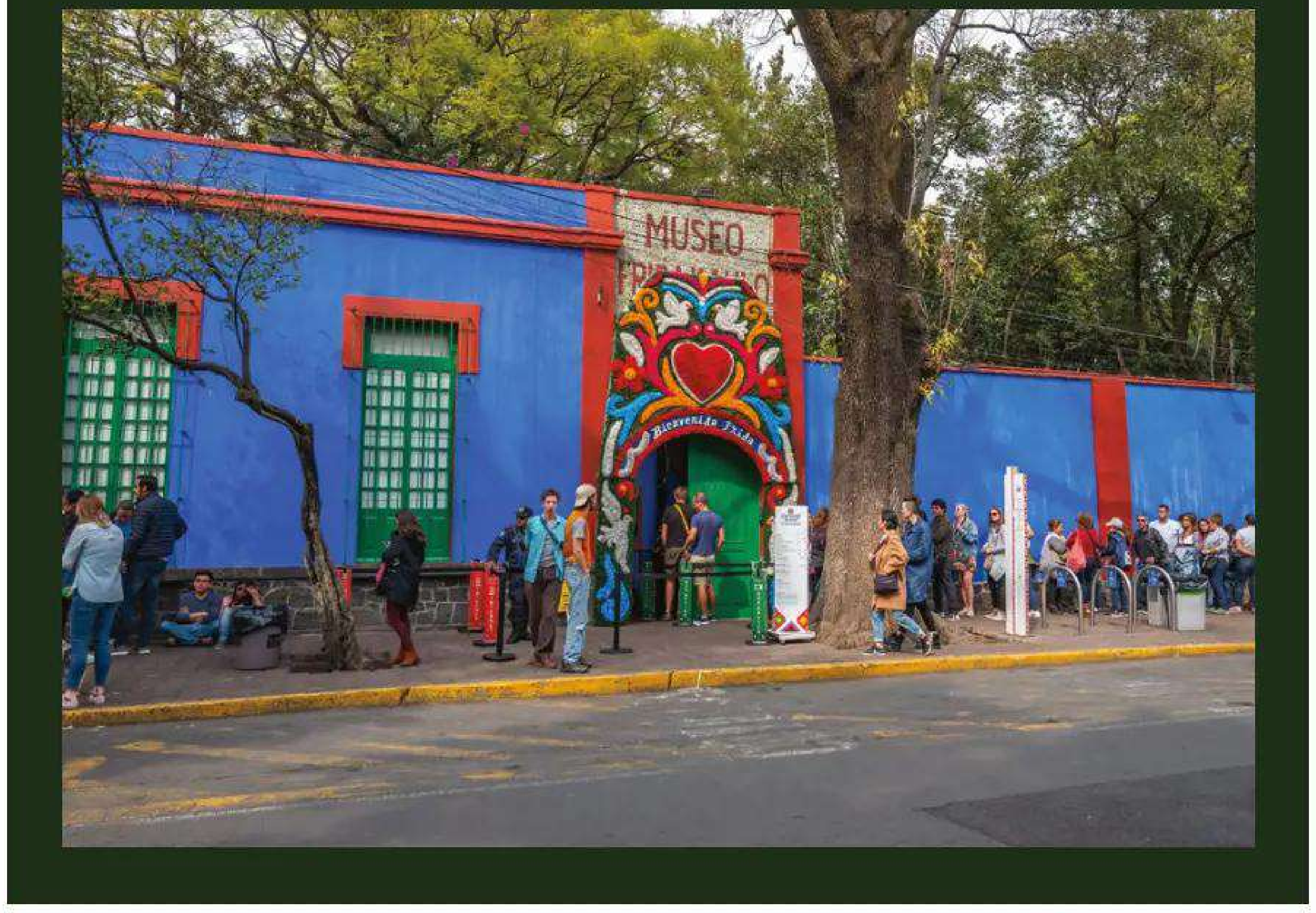
Kahlo first became well-known in the art world through her marriage to the famous Mexican painter and muralist Rivera, who was 20 years her senior. John Launer calls Kahlo and Rivero among the earliest media celebrities: their love story and marriage was intriguing for their contemporaries and has still remained a topic of interest.

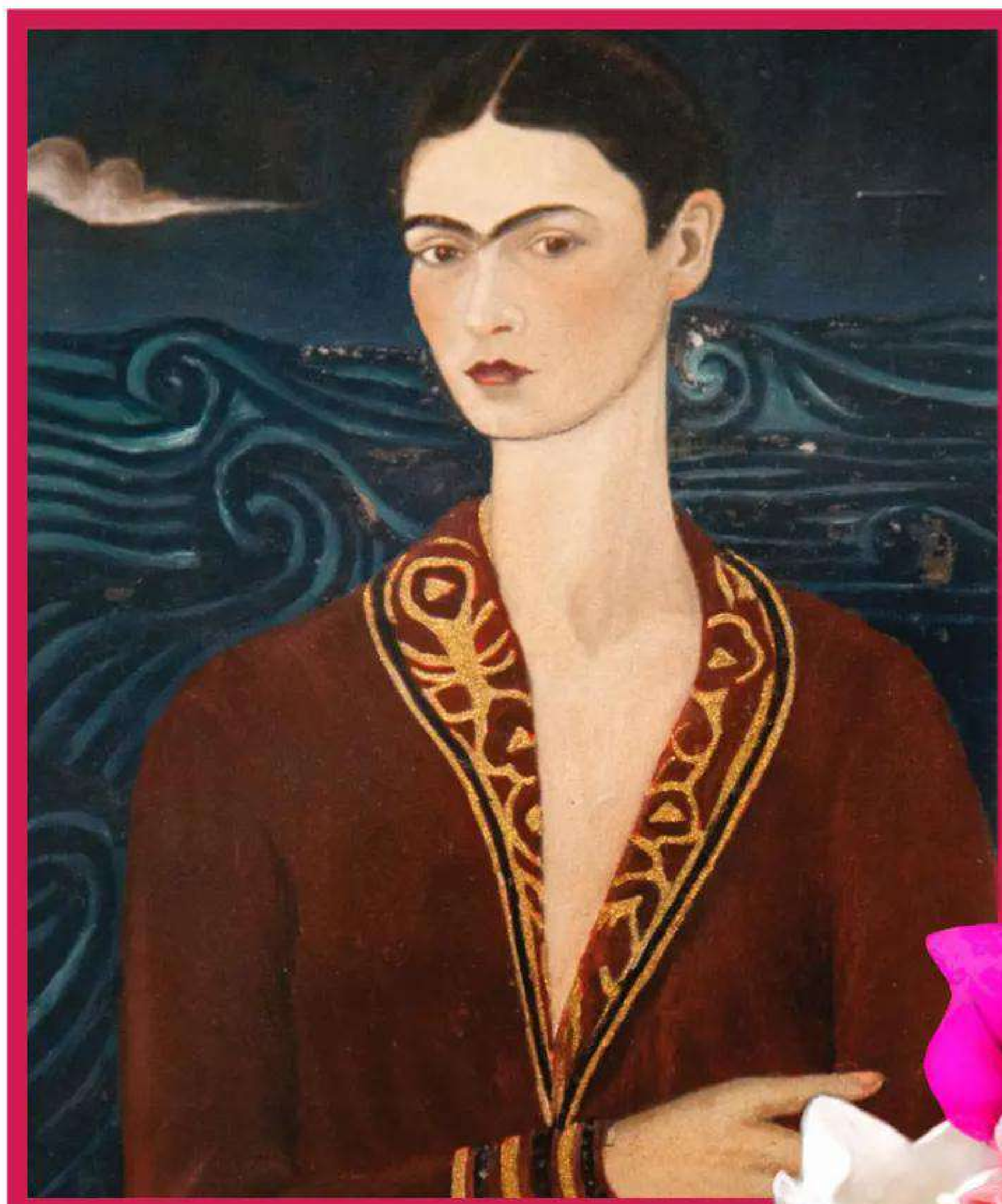
Meeting through the Mexican Communist Party, the couple married a year later in 1929 and divorced in 1940, then married again that same year. In Kahlo’s first letter to Rivera in her diary, she writes “‘I’d like to paint you, but there are no colors, because there are so many, in my confusion, the tangible form of my great love.” Two years after their wedding, the patron and friend of Rivera, Albert M Bender commissioned Kahlo to paint the couple’s wedding. It became the oil on canvas *Frieda And Diego Rivera* (1931), ▶

FRIDA’S CASA AZUL

The blue home of Kahlo and Rivera is now a museum

The Frida Kahlo Museum, also known as Casa Azul, is a museum dedicated to the life and work of Kahlo. It was here where Kahlo grew up, lived occasionally with her husband and later died, and has since been made a public museum welcoming about 25,000 visitors monthly, making it one of the most popular museums in Mexico. Originally built in 1904, the strikingly cobalt blue corner house is built around a central garden courtyard and located in the area of Colonia del Carmen, which became popular among intellectuals and bohemians in the 1920s. Walking through the different rooms of the museum is a rich journey through Kahlo’s life. The Artist’s Bedroom is a particularly intimate room: here you find Kahlo’s bed with the mirror that Kahlo’s mother installed when Kahlo was bedridden after her bus accident, the very beginning of her artistic career. Each room adds to the layer of who Kahlo was, her inspirations, her clothes and experiences. Don’t miss the family kitchen, where you can find Kahlo’s recipe for mole sauce on the wall.





LEFT An early self-portrait from 1926, depicting Kahlo wearing a velvet dress

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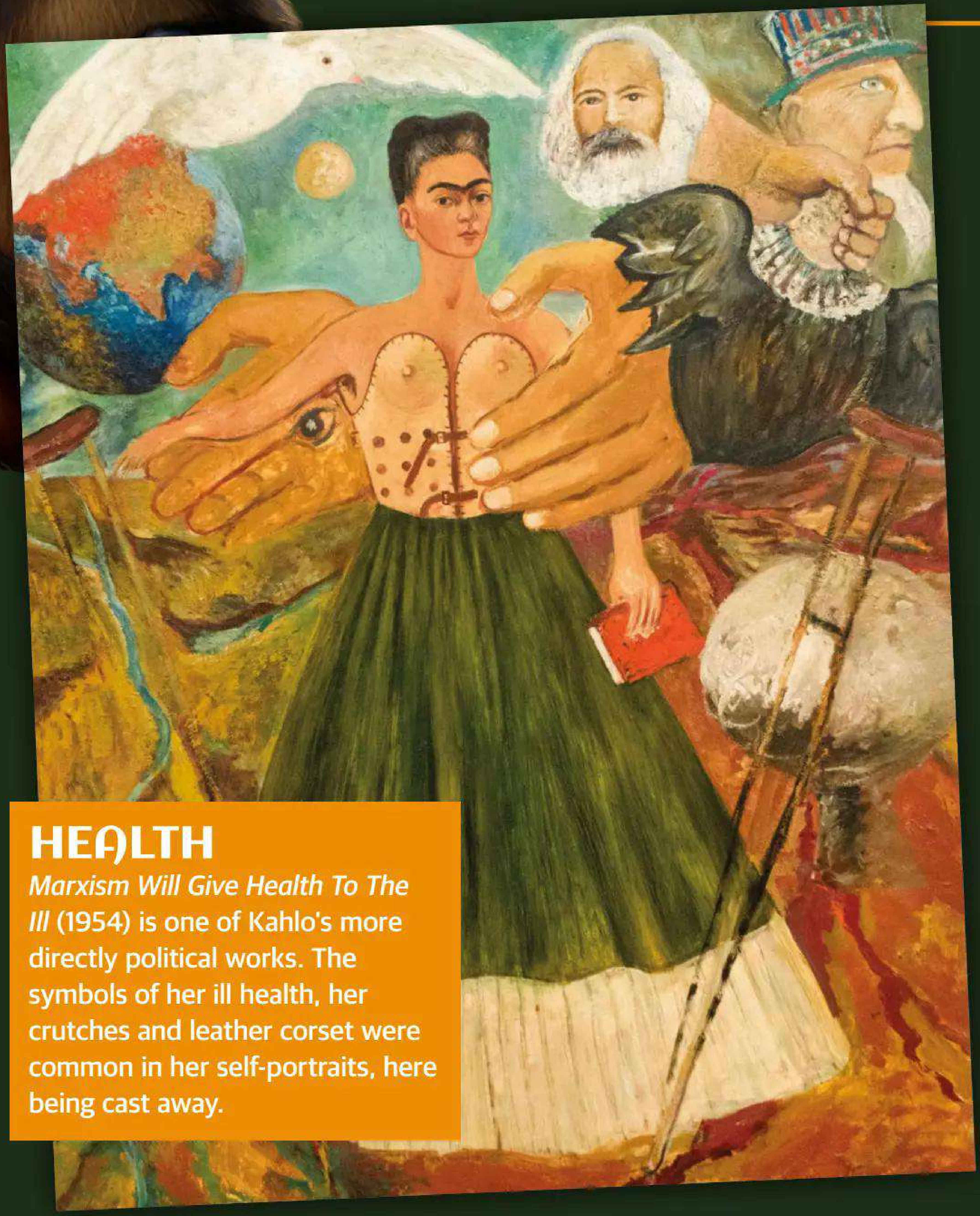
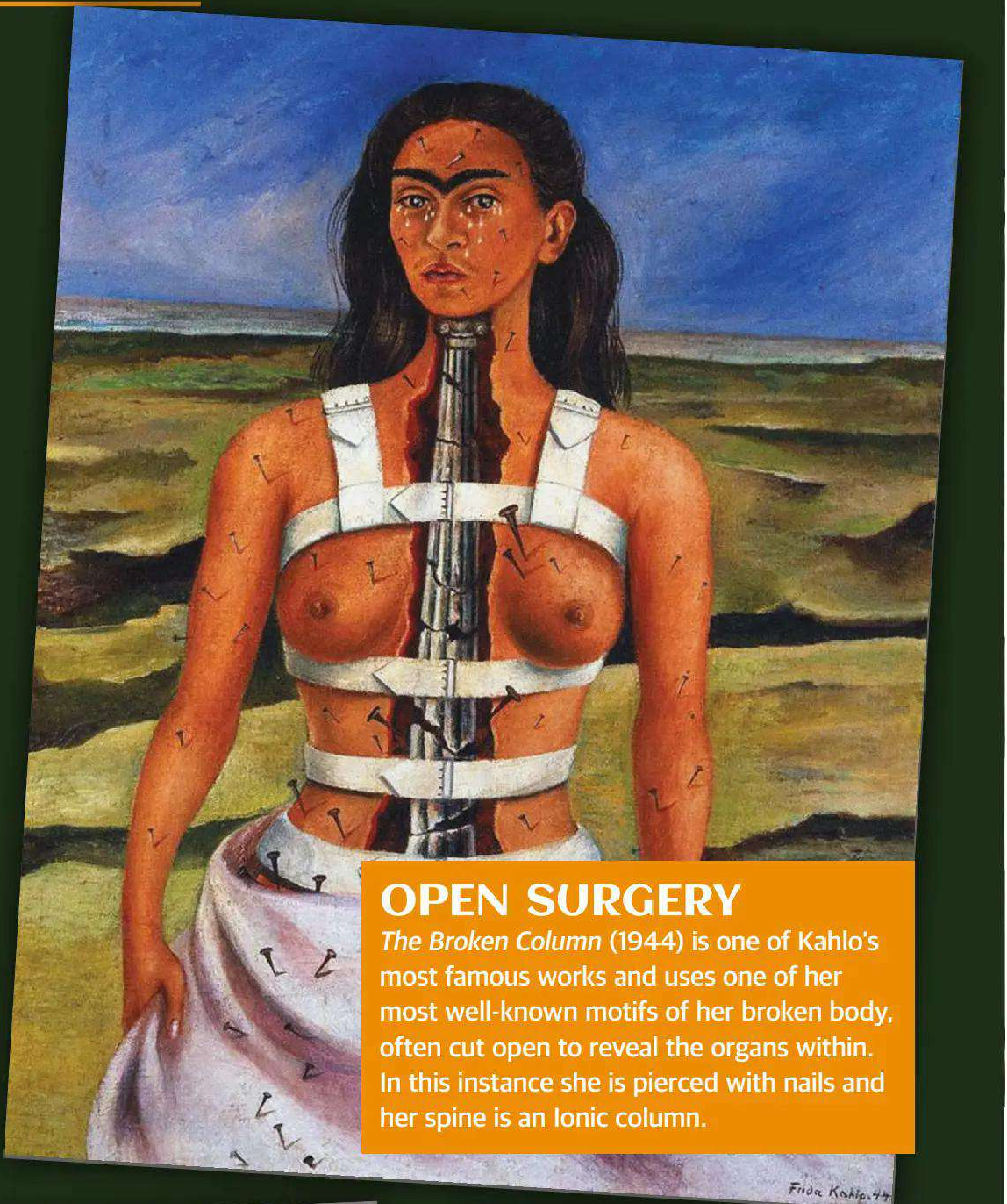
SYMBOLISM OF KAHLO

Her paintings were always packed with meaning and history



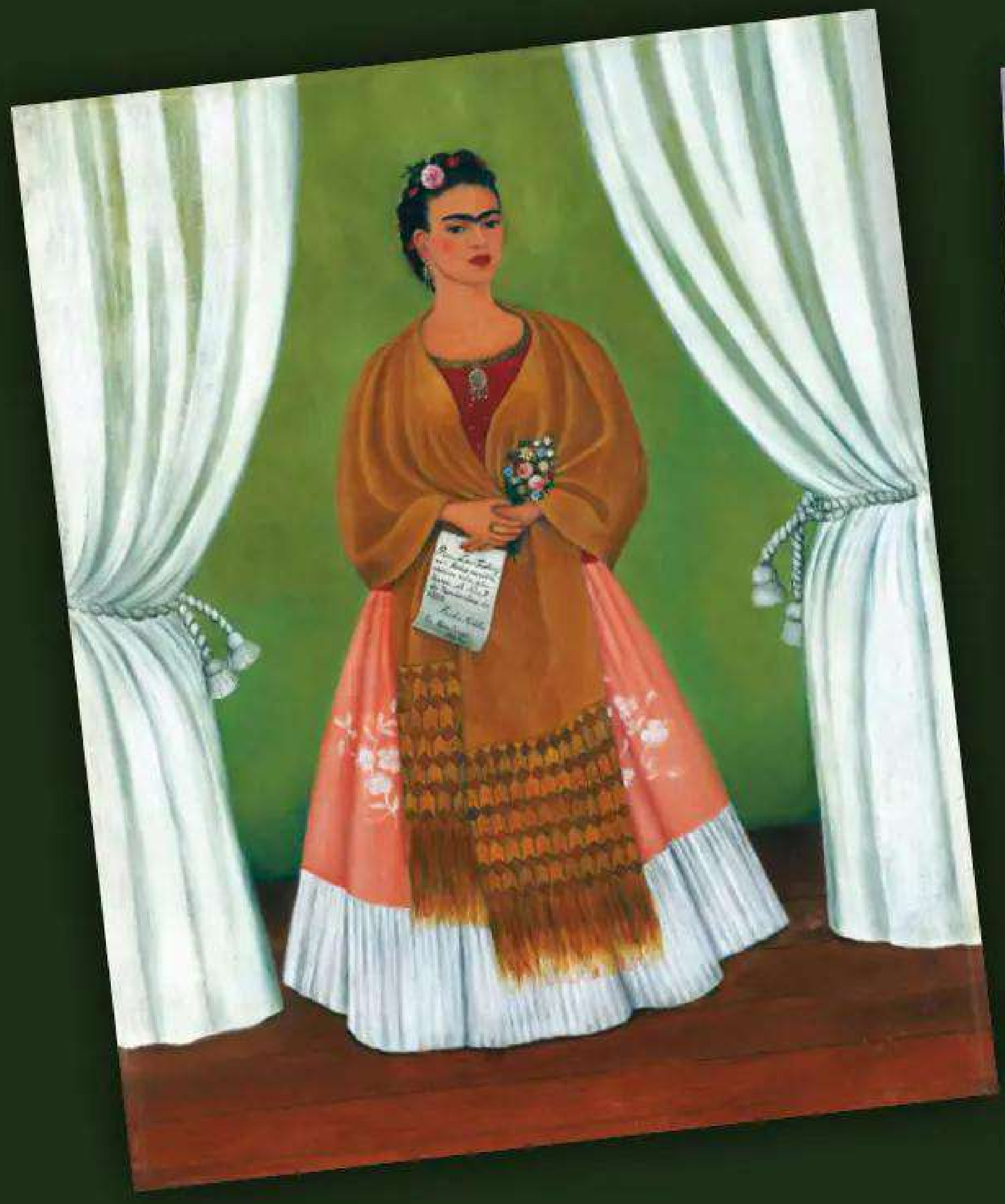
HEALTH

Marxism Will Give Health To The Ill (1954) is one of Kahlo's more directly political works. The symbols of her ill health, her crutches and leather corset were common in her self-portraits, here being cast away.



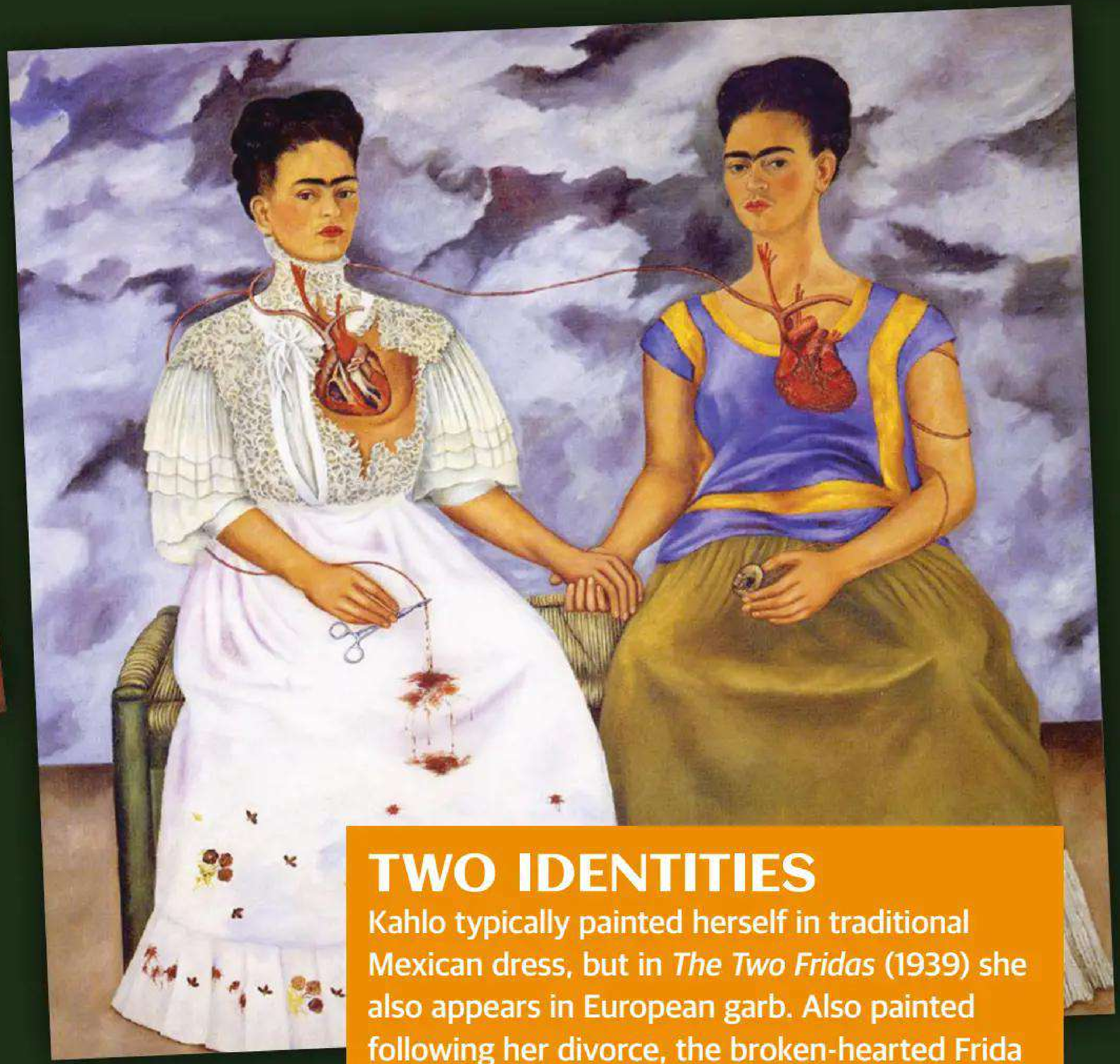
OPEN SURGERY

The Broken Column (1944) is one of Kahlo's most famous works and uses one of her most well-known motifs of her broken body, often cut open to reveal the organs within. In this instance she is pierced with nails and her spine is an Ionic column.



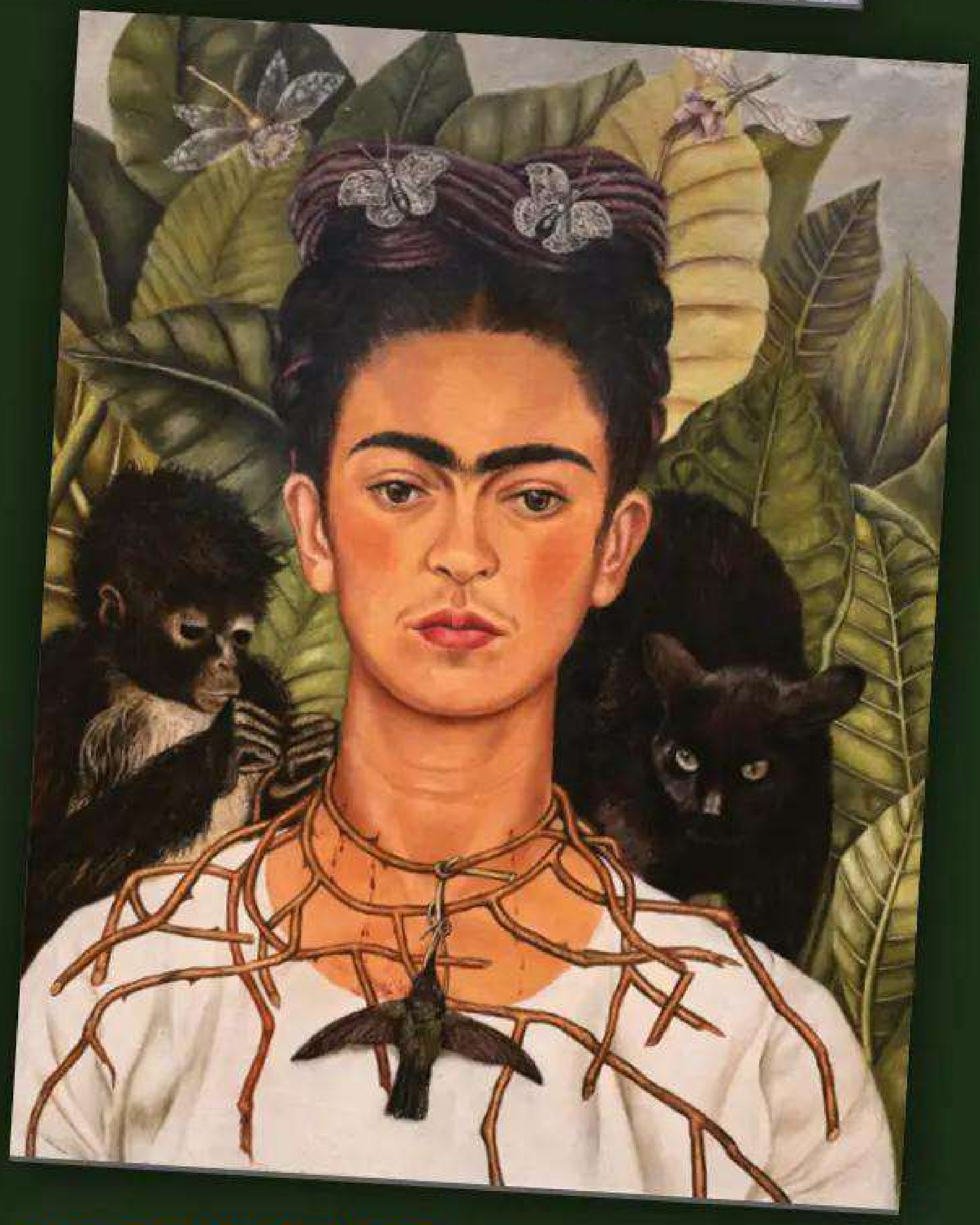
RELIGIOUS IMAGERY

This painting, *Self-Portrait Dedicated To Leon Trotsky* (1937), depicts Kahlo on a stage. This is a reference to a popular form of devotional images in Mexico at the time called retablos, which Kahlo collected.



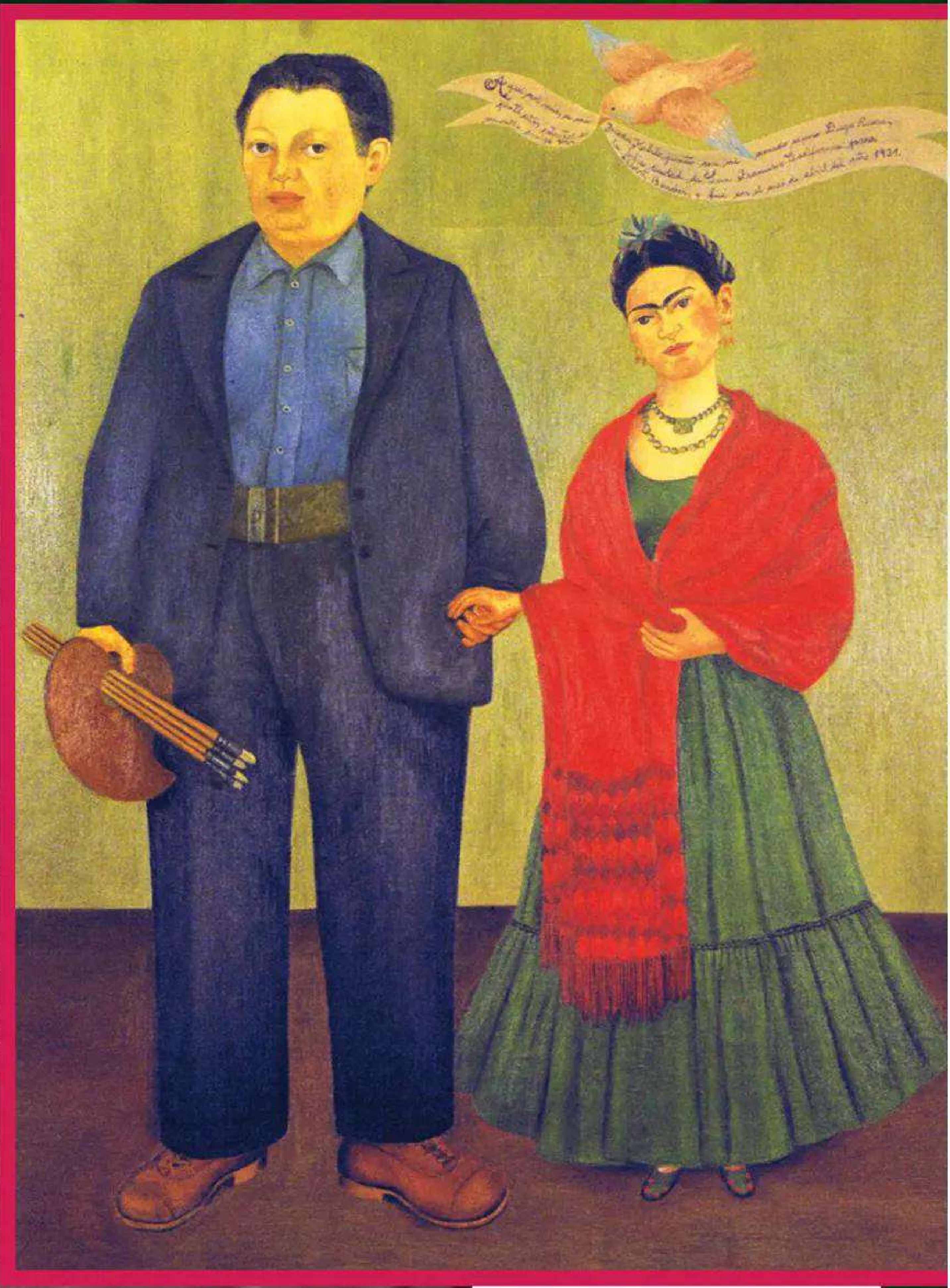
TWO IDENTITIES

Kahlo typically painted herself in traditional Mexican dress, but in *The Two Fridas* (1939) she also appears in European garb. Also painted following her divorce, the broken-hearted Frida is from the old world and the Mexican Frida, while bearing her heart, remains whole.



MONKEYS

Painted after her divorce from Rivera in 1940, *Self-Portrait With Thorn Necklace And Hummingbird* includes a monkey, very common in her art. She and Rivera kept monkeys as pets, thought to be surrogates for the children they were unable to have.



ABOVE *Frieda And Diego Rivera* (1931), a wedding portrait commissioned by Albert Bender

LEFT Kahlo stands next to her famous 1939 oil painting *The Two Fridas*

ABOVE Frida Kahlo's prosthetic leg, a red leather boot with embroidery and self-tied bells on it

which depicts the two holding hands in the centre of the painting. She paints Rivera as *the* artist with his free hand carrying his palette and paint brushes while she leans into him. The bird seen flying above them is carrying a banner that reads "Here you see us, me Frieda Kahlo, with my dearest husband Diego Rivera. I painted these pictures in the delightful city of San Francisco California for our companion Mr. Albert Bender, and it was in the month of April of the year 1931," positioning herself as the maker and wife of Rivera, with the two not being mutually exclusive.

The wedding bliss between the two artists did not continue. During their marriage, both Kahlo and Rivera had several extramarital affairs; he had an affair with her sister Cristina and the American actress Paulette Goddard, and she took Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky as her lover. In the self-portrait, *Diego And I* (1949), Kahlo renders the deep sadness she felt when Rivera almost asked for a divorce: her dark hair flows around her neck, suggestive of strangulation, and she cries big tears. Above her eyebrows sits a portrait of Rivera, always on her mind, ever-present, even when he puts her through agony. In 2021, this painting was sold for $34.9m at Sotheby's New York, making it the highest priced art piece by a Latin American artist ever sold at auction. It was bought by Eduardo F Costantini, who planned to exhibit it at the Latin American Art Museum of Buenos Aires (known as MALBA).

"DURING THEIR MARRIAGE, BOTH KAHLO AND RIVERA HAD SEVERAL EXTRAMARITAL AFFAIRS"

Frida Kahlo had several miscarriages during their marriage, one which she represents in the painting *Henry Ford Hospital* (1932), created during Kahlo and Rivera's three-year long stay in the United States. In a gut-wrenching painting, she depicts herself lying alone and naked in a floating hospital bed and delivers a dead male foetus, with the still Detroit city skyline featured behind her in an otherwise claustrophobic pictorial space. Kahlo's honest depiction of pregnancy loss is a powerful one: it not only shows the bodily process, it also illustrates the grief and loneliness. The couple inspired each other's art despite their troubles when they were together.

KAHLO'S COMMUNISM

From as early as her school days, Kahlo was active in political movements that overtly supported a global communist revolution, beginning what would be a lifelong commitment to radical revolution. She changed her birthday, informing her friends that she was in fact born in 1910, coinciding with the year the Mexican Revolution took off. At school, she joined the 'Los Cachuchas', a radical group who read and debated revolutionary Marxist works and Russian and Mexican literature. Kahlo viewed herself as a 'daughter of the Mexican revolution'.

By the age of 16, she had joined the youth group of the Mexican Communist Party, and believed strongly ▶

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> “KAHLO AND RIVERA WELCOMED TROTSKY AND HIS WIFE TO THE CASA AZUL, NOW EQUIPPED WITH GUARDS, ALARMS AND BARRICADES”

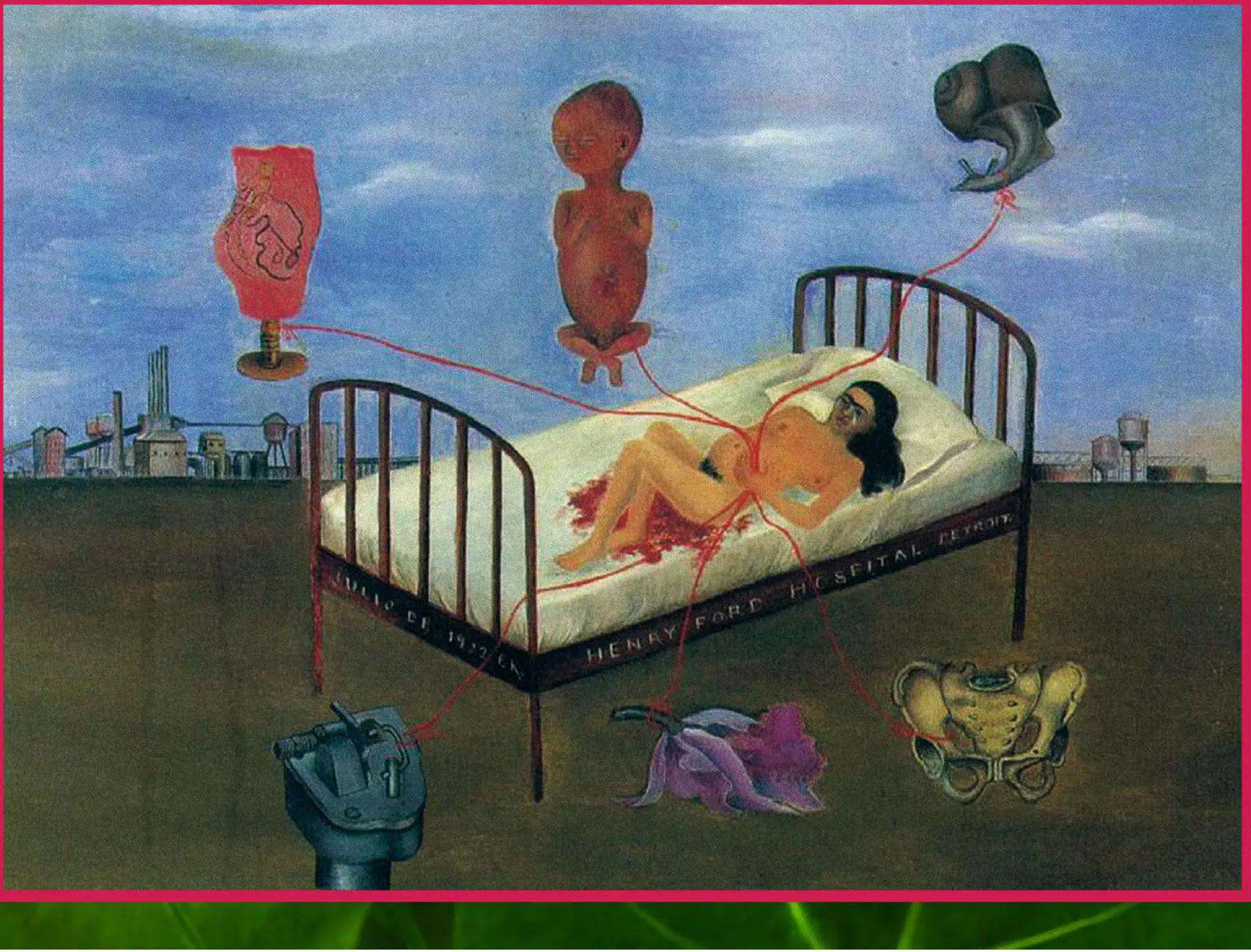
in socialism and Marxist-Leninism. She remained an active member of the Communist Party, giving speeches, leading rallies, and attending meetings. She campaigned against the Cold War and US foreign policy in Latin America and beyond, for nuclear disarmament and a multitude of other global causes throughout her life; even with ailing health in her final days. She was last seen, 11 days before her death, attending a rally in solidarity with Guatemala, which experienced a CIA-led invasion to overthrow its president, who had supported the Guatemalan people’s right to land taken over by US corporations.

She saw much of the purpose of her art as being able to carry her political message. During her last years, Frida wrote in her diary, “I must struggle with all my strength to contribute the few positive things my health allows to the Revolution, the only real reason to live.”

From 1930 to 1933, Frida had lived in the United States, which she dubbed “Gringolandia”. With Rivera, she lived in San Francisco, Detroit and New York City, while the country suffered through the Great Depression. Here, she wrote back home to Mexico, “High society here turns me off and I feel a bit of rage against all these rich guys here, since I have seen thousands of people in the most terrible misery, without anything to eat and with no place to sleep, that is what most impressed me here, it is terrifying to see the rich having parties day and night while thousands of people are dying of hunger.”

BELOW Photograph of Frida Kahlo and her husband Diego Rivera from 1932

BOTTOM *Henry Ford Hospital*, 1932, a depiction of the pain of pregnancy loss



Kahlo entered into a romantic liaison with the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky in 1937. She was 29, and he 57. Kahlo and Rivera saw Trotsky as a hero of the 1917 October Uprising in Russia. But with the split of the Communist Party into Stalinists and Trotskyites, Trotsky was exiled in 1929 (Rivera was also expelled and Kahlo quit the Communist Party in solidarity), and eventually sought refuge in Mexico with the help of pressure on the Mexican government by Kahlo.

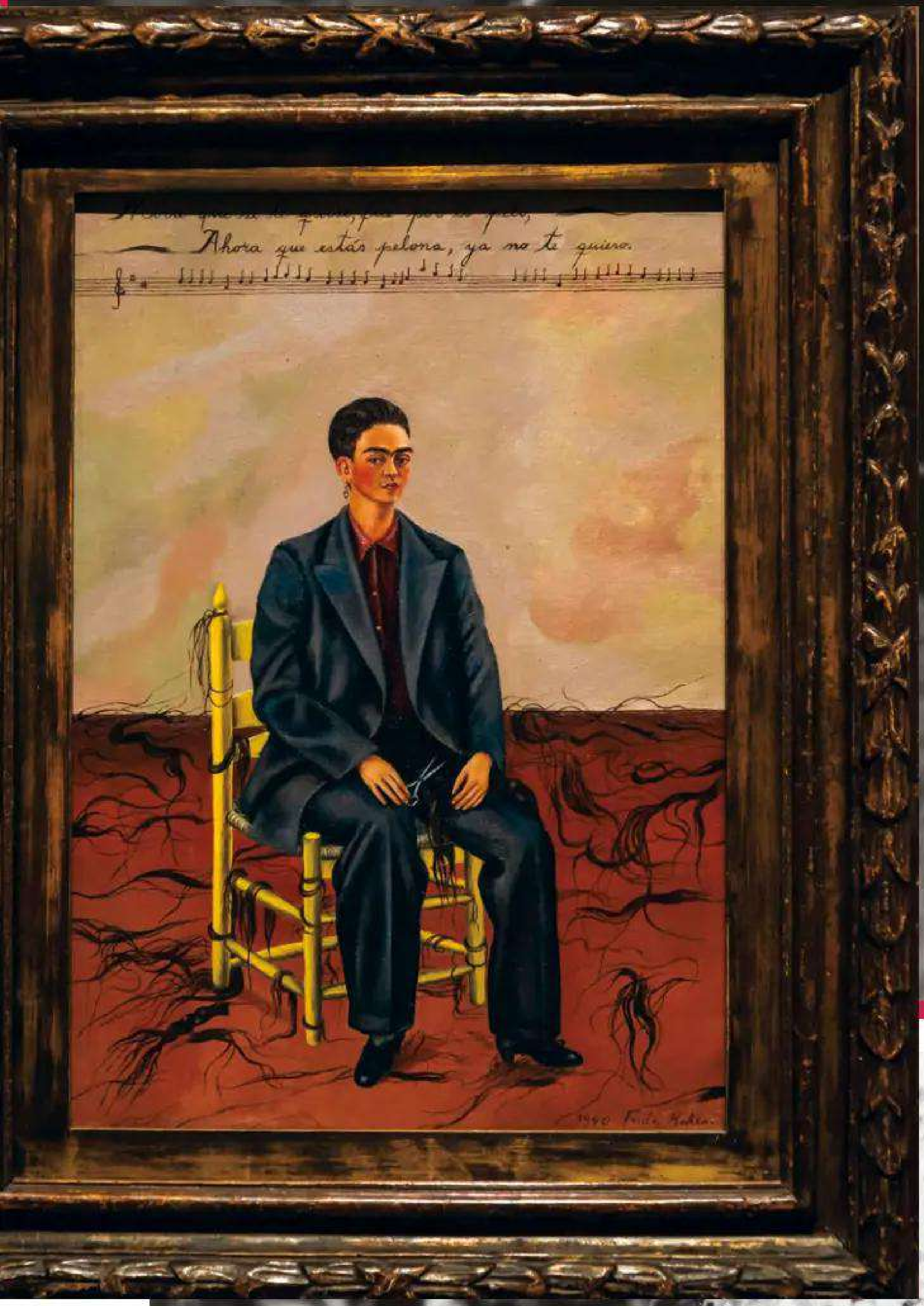
Kahlo and Rivera welcomed Trotsky and his wife to the Casa Azul, now equipped with guards, alarms and barricades. It was here that Kahlo and Trotsky’s affair took place for some months. It did not last, but they remained friends in life and politics, and a sensual self-portrait she dedicated to him in 1937 remains a lasting memento of that period. In 1940, now staying in Mexico City, Trotsky was murdered in his bed with an ice-pick. Kahlo was briefly arrested and suspected to be an accomplice in his murder, although the culprit was later identified as Ramón Mercader, a Spanish communist accused of being an agent of Stalin’s NKVD.

At Frida Kahlo’s funeral, the Communist Party’s flag was draped over her coffin, attesting to its personal importance to her. However, she would not live to see the rise of figures such as Che Guevara and Raul and Fidel Castro, and the dawn of the socialist revolution in Mexico that was soon to come.

A MEXICAN ICON

2004 was a memorable year for scholars and fans of Kahlo as an intimate collection of her belongings was revealed. For 50 years, it had been locked away in Kahlo’s bathroom in Casa Azul following the wishes of her husband and his friend and patron Dolores Olmedo. The director of the Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera Anahuacalli Museums, Hilda Trujillo, said of the moment that they started to open the doors to this personal archive, “it was very slow, because we didn’t know what was there, but we knew what we were doing was important and we didn’t want to waste a minute.”

The museum started sorting and cataloguing objects and did not reveal the existence of the collection to the public for another three years. The collection was seen for the first time outside of Mexico in 2018, when the V&A in London was loaned more than 200 of the objects for the exhibition Frida Kahlo: Making Her Self Up (June-November 2018). On display was, among many other things, Frida’s prosthetic leg with a leather boot, a plaster


Ahora que estás pelona, ya no te quiero.

ABOVE Kahlo and Rivera were both supporters of Russian communist revolutionary Leon Trotsky

INSET *Self-Portrait With Cropped Hair*, 1940, painted not long after Frida and Diego's divorce

LEFT Kahlo's posthumous reputation has continued to grow, resulting in what has been dubbed 'Fridamania'

corset, jewellery pieces and makeup (she was fond of Revlon's red lipstick 'Everything's Rosy'), all juxtaposed next to photographs of Kahlo and paintings by her. The exhibition also showcased the artist's collection of indigenous dress, which she wore often, both in real life and in paintings. It included the rebozos (fringed shawls), embroidered huipiles (square-cut tops), enaguas (skirts) and holanes (flounces).

Her commitment to celebrating all things Mexican and Mexico did not end at her wardrobe. Rivera and Kahlo re-planted their garden so that it would only grow plants native to Mexico, such as succulents. And then there was, of course, her art. Aztec symbolism abounded in Kahlo's work.

The goddess figure of the Coatlicue, a serpent-skirted goddess adorned with a necklace of skulls upon a severed neck, was a favourite motif. Skeletons and hearts are also common in her work. Janice Helland argues that these are important symbols both in ancient Aztec art, but also in Kahlo's ▶

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FRIDAMANIA

Ironically, capitalism loves the communist icon Frida Kahlo

After her death, Kahlo would only gain in popularity. Today you can buy cups, bags and tea towels sporting her well-known but anti-establishment visage. These are now widely marketed images, printed as they are on T-shirts and posters; they have become the subject of memes, and a modern classic inspiration for fancy-dress parties. You will find her face as emojis and Snapchat filters, and even adorning the packaging of sanitary towels or a credit card. Her suffering, and depictions of sorrow, pain and grief make her an easy heroine, an obvious candidate for the rare status of "great female artist". Triumphing against continual hardship, Kahlo has become a global symbol of resilience against a host of grievances with the modern world. She is seen as a feminist hero, a queer icon, a longing mother-to-be, a skilled and clever subverter of gender norms and roles. She speaks for the elite and the under-privileged alike. As a Mexican who championed indigenous imagery and a deep connection to a struggling nation, she can be seen as a voice for the voiceless.

Some Fridamaniacs argue ardently that Kahlo would have wanted her name, face and message to be seen and known by the world. Others believe that the capitalist exploitation of her work into cheaply reproduced commodities and convenient souvenirs represents a watering down, or even a total misunderstanding of Kahlo's tireless commitment to her politics, particularly her active involvement in the communist movement: a politics that might not be supported by all who flaunt Frida on a tote bag, should they fully delve into it. Many have claimed that her use of indigenous Mexican imagery is seductive, exotic and enticing, but not for the right reasons. By painting herself over and over again, in what some call an act of narcissism or self-obsession, Kahlo herself cemented her striking face but, ironically, few truly care to understand her ideology, her nuances or her contradictions.

Frida Kahlo
Frida Kahlo
Frida Kahlo
SOCK SMITH
SOCK SMITH
SOCK SMITH
VIVA LA VIDA

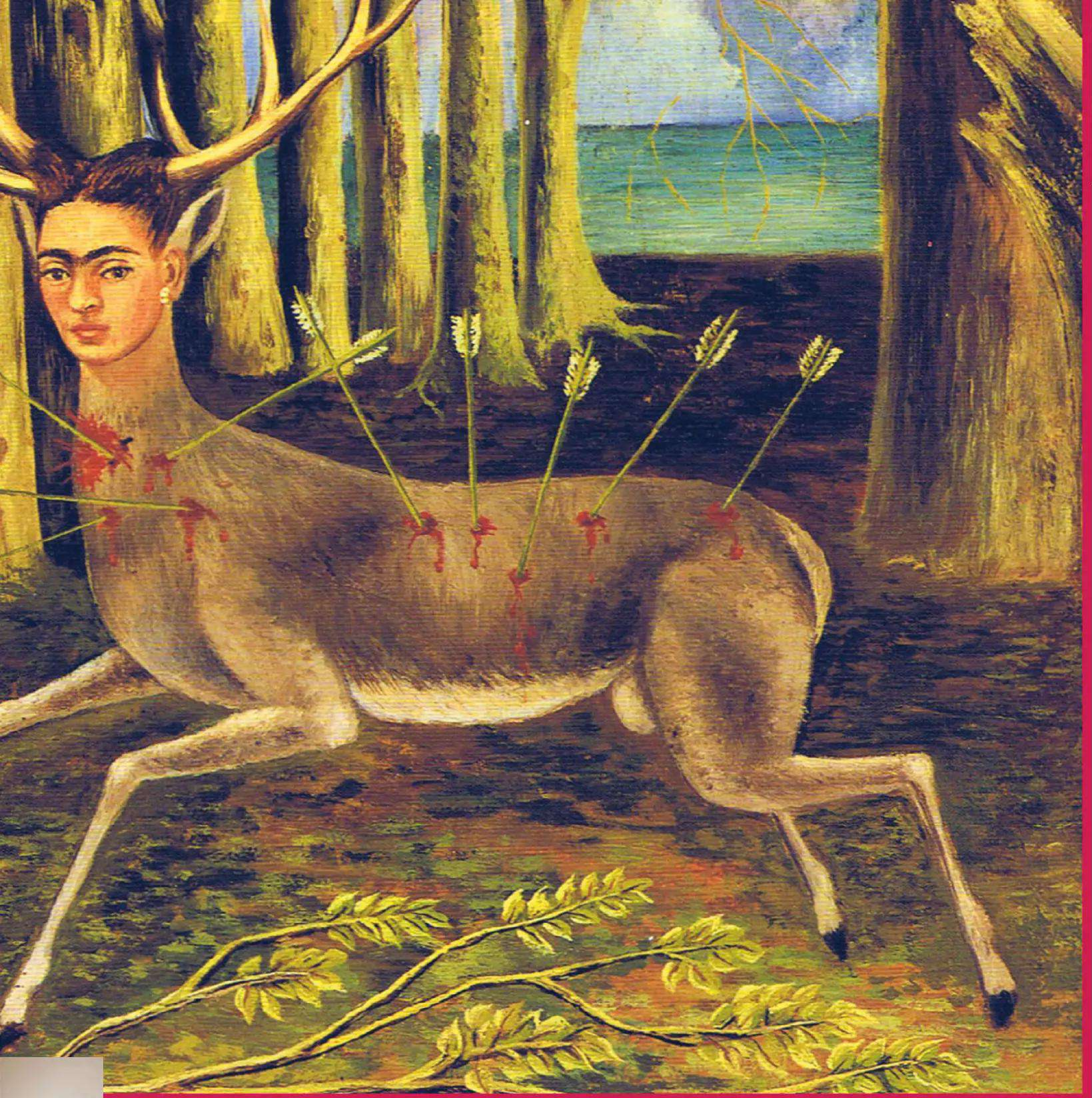
evocation of 'Mexicanidad' in her work. Mexicanidad was a form of romantic nationalism that, in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution, focused upon traditional art and artefacts uniting all indigenous nations of Mexico, in a rejection of old forms of 'being Mexican', and in search of new ones in such a racially diverse and ethnically mixed nation. It revered Aztec traditions above other pre-Columbian cultures such as the Mayan, Toltec and others, creating a simple and uniform image of an independent Mexican nation connected to the indigenous empires of its past.

But the Aztecs were not the only indigenous group that inspired Kahlo. She was also enchanted by the traditional Tehuana dress of the Zapotec women, from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. She had no family or ancestral links to this region or people, but claimed to find their dress the most beautiful of all native dress forms. Helland believes that part of the appeal was because of the Zapotec's matriarchal society, and so for Kahlo, Zapotec women represented an attractive ideal of freedom, leadership and economic independence that she perhaps sought to embody.

> "TO KAHLO, HER DRESS WAS A POWERFUL WAY TO AFFIRM HER MIXED-RACE HERITAGE AND MEXICAN PRIDE"

To Kahlo, her dress was a powerful way to affirm her mixed-race heritage and Mexican pride, something that she is often celebrated for. However, Joanna García Cherán wrote in a 2021 article *An Indigenous Perspective On Frida Kahlo* that the 'nationalism' that Kahlo promoted both in her art and personal style perpetuate the "construction of a mythologized Indianness at the expense of indigenous people." She responds to how Frida Kahlo was part of the *Indigenismo* movement, which unfolded in Mexico and the Andean region in the early 20th century and celebrated indigenous art and cultural traditions, but without the contribution from indigenous groups.

Cherán explains that *Indigenismo* became a cultural ideology that was articulated by the Mexican white and mestizo (Spanish and indigenous mixed race) elite, pushing to create



ABOVE *The Wounded Deer,* 1946, a vision of Kahlo's injuries and ailing health

LEFT Visitors looking at the displayed works in the Frida Kahlo Retrospective in the Martin-Gropius-Bau in 2010

BELOW Exhibition display of Frida Kahlo's clothes at Museo Frida Kahlo

RIGHT Frida Kahlo's casket is draped in a communist flag at her funeral

a “new prototypical Mexican Indian and homogenizing the many distinct indigenous cultures.” Within this sat the Mexicanidad movement that Kahlo espoused, and of which Rivera was a leading proponent as well. It was a nationalistic, inward-looking idea, but that was in line with an emerging trend in the wider region.

In this sense, the movement sought to both create a colour-blind nation in which all people are equally mestizo despite the specificities of one's genetic, cultural and ethnic makeup, while also, according to historian Mary Kay Vaughan, creating “the browning of the nation” away from whiteness and Spanishness. Cherán writes, “Unsurprisingly, indigenous people were denied an active role in the conception and execution of this new ideology. It is through these historical conditions and cultural frameworks that Kahlo's legacy needs reckoning.”

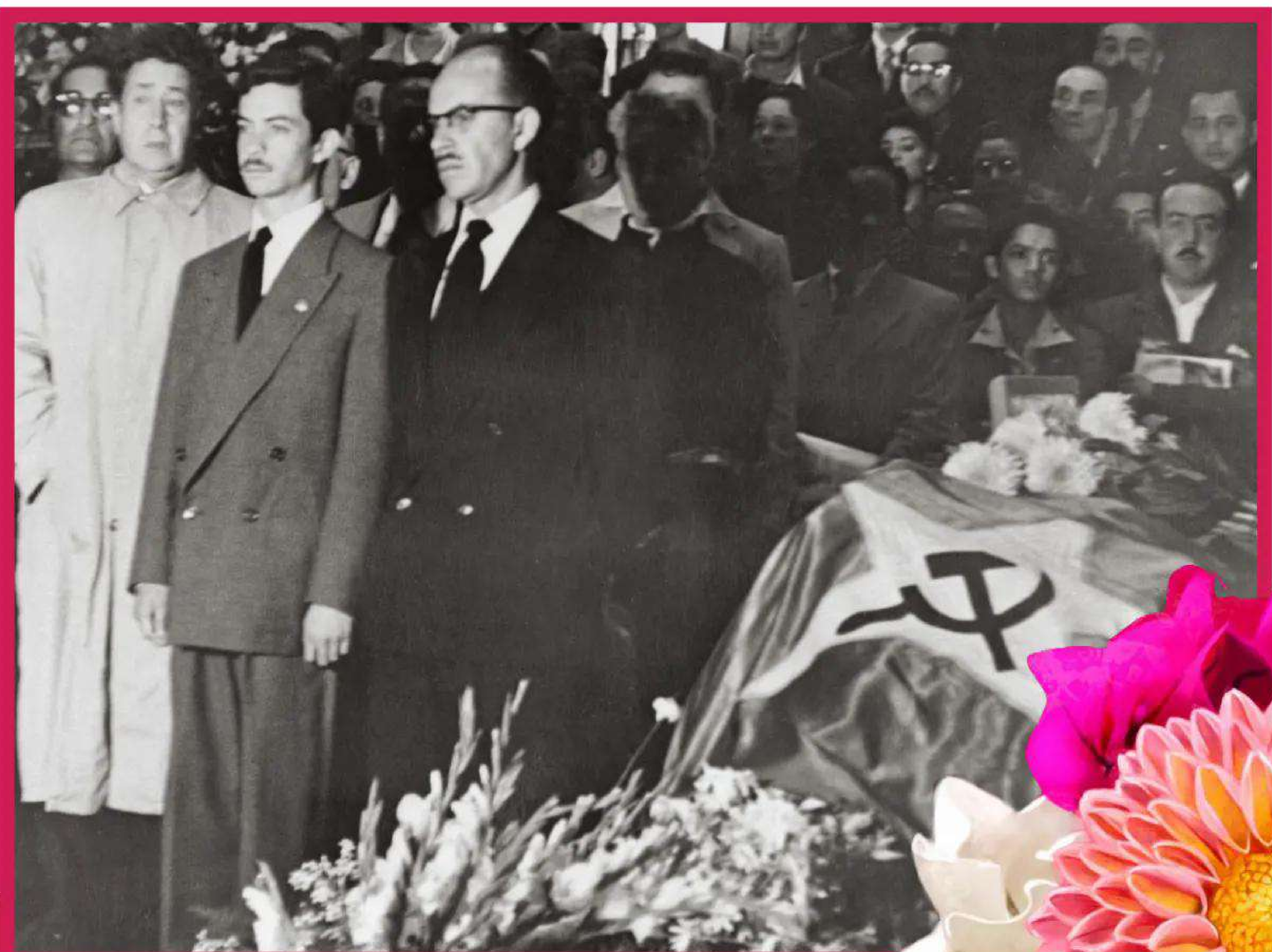
Kahlo's privilege and distance from the realities of living life as an indigenous person means, according to Cherán, that we should rethink her “active participation in the construction of ‘Indianness’,” through her clothing and her display of pre-Hispanic artefacts, which all contributed to further Kahlo's status as an artist. Cherán asks for there to be more inclusive conversations about Kahlo that allow for indigenous voices to have their say on her legacy.

AN EARLY END

Frida Kahlo died in 1954, shortly after attending a socialist rally against the US's actions in Guatemala. She arrived in a wheelchair suffering from pneumonia and an addiction to painkillers and alcohol that ravaged her body, not to mention prohibiting her ability to paint. It remains unknown whether her untimely death, at just 47, was due to the pneumonia, or if she took her own life, possibly with the help of Rivera. In March 2023, the BBC documentary *Becoming Frida Kahlo* featured an interview with Rivera's grandson, Juan Rafael Coronel Rivera, in which he claimed that Rivera probably assisted in ending Kahlo's life in an act of love because she was in such excruciating pain in her final days.

Though still young, she had defied the odds of her terrible teenage injuries by living, and resisting, until middle age. While she was much-discussed in feminist art circles and saw her pieces auctioned for reasonable sums, her work and name diminished in the mainstream art world for 30 years, until a biography was published in 1983 by Hayden Herrera. From here, she quickly gained popularity once more, adorning buses in New York City by 1991.

Her unplucked moustache and unibrow now a symbol of thwarting beauty standards for women, her paintings on metal sheets rather than canvas in the style of Mexican street artists, and her novel juxtaposing in her art of contemporary Mexican imagery with historical designs native to Central America, it is possible to see Kahlo representing something in everyone. Today, her legacy endures as an inspirational source of resilience and rebellion against the mental, physical and societal shackles that confined her, and those of the people she stood up for.



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They Weren't Just Friends!

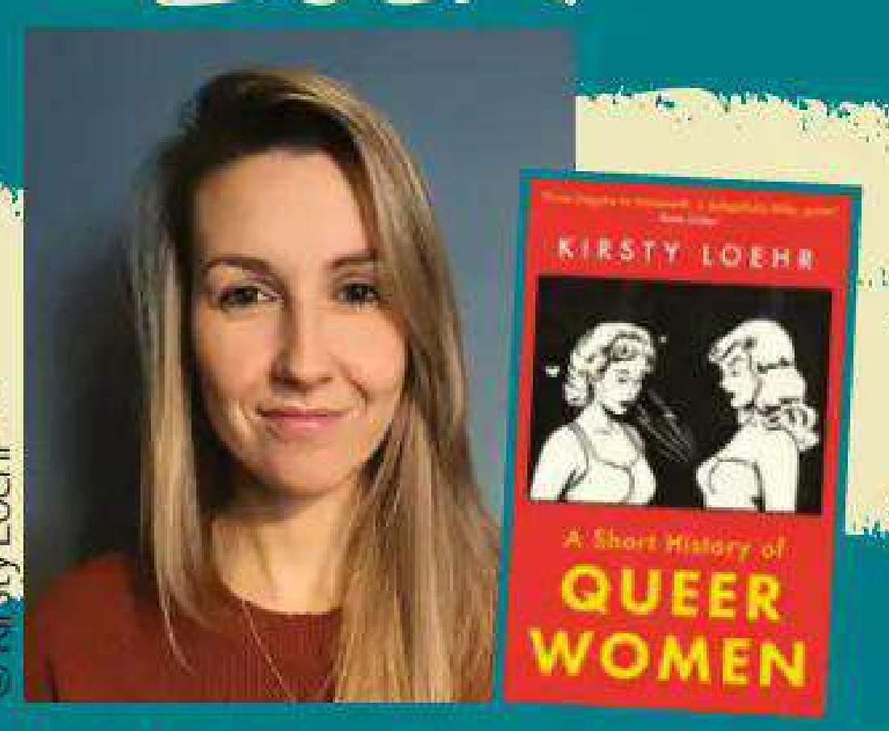
THE HISTORY OF QUEER WOMEN

Four queer history experts explain the erasure of sapphic relationships in the past and the importance of efforts to highlight them today

Interviews by Callum McKelvie

From the Greek poet Sappho to 20th century footballer Lily Parr, history is full of women who were romantically and sexually attracted to other women. Unfortunately, like other queer peoples, queer women have found themselves erased from the history books, their lovers dismissed as 'just friends'. But vital work is being done to ensure these stories are restored to the historical narrative. We spoke to four LGBTQ+ history experts about historical queer women and why queer histories are so important. ▶

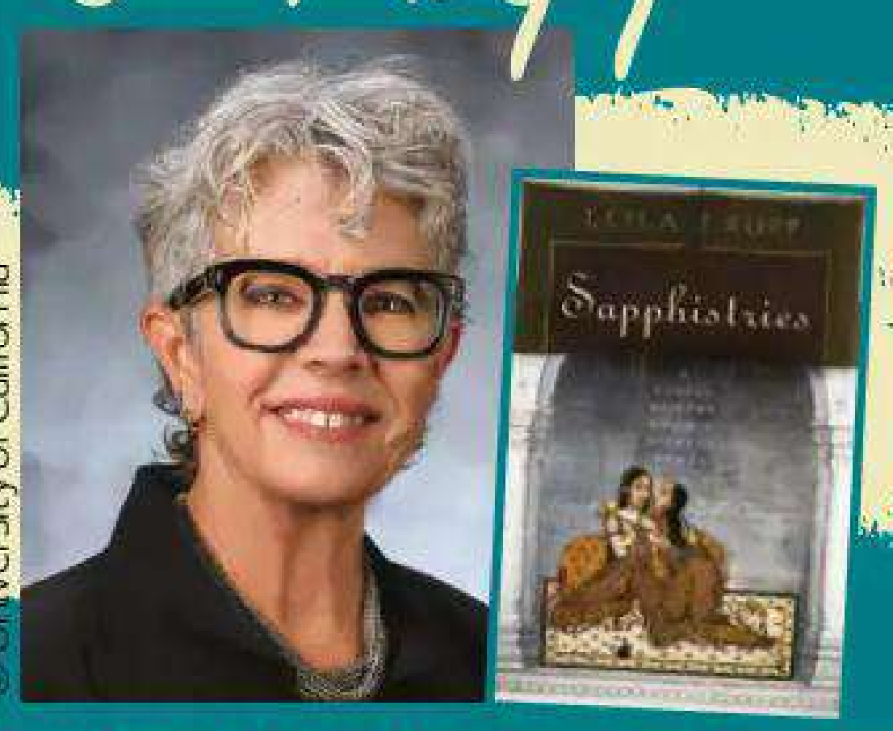
Kirsty Loehr



© Kirsty Loehr

Kirsty Loehr is a writer based in Brighton in the United Kingdom. She is the author of *A Short History Of Queer Women* that explores the history of queer women through a comedic lens.

Leila J Rupp



© University of California

Leila J Rupp is a historian, feminist and Professor of Feminist Studies at the University of California. She is the author of *Sapphistries: A Global History Of Love Between Women*, among other works.

Amelia Possanza

LESBIAN LOVE STORY
Amelia Possanza

© Becca Farsace

Amelia Possanza is the author of *Lesbian Love Story: A Memoir In Archives* which explores seven stories of love between women. She also works as a publicist.

Harper-Hugo Darling

MAKING QUEER HISTORY

© Jordan Anthony Tate

Harper-Hugo Darling is the founder and head-writer of Making Queer History, a site that explores LGBTQ+ history through a series of informed articles and podcast episodes.

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What are some of the significant events in the history of queer women that deserve to be highlighted and analysed further?

LJR: The very concept of "queer women" needs to be analysed first, because it means something particular in a contemporary context. From a historical perspective, we use the term to mean other-than-heterosexual women and what we would now call "nonbinary" people assigned female at birth. Because, of course, people didn't until relatively recently identify as "queer" or "nonbinary," although throughout time there have been a range of labels for women known or suspected to love and desire other women.

AP: Queer women, and members of the broader queer community, have been present for so many of the big "textbook" events in American history, from the Civil War to the Great Depression to World War II to the March on Washington. We've even had some events that are uniquely ours, like the Stonewall Riots and the AIDS crisis. That said, the lesbians I studied and wrote about pushed me to go beyond analysing the role queer people have played in the moments emphasised by traditional historians. Queer lives throughout history have been marked by a practice of daily resistance; resistance in the clothes we wore or in the structures of our intimate relationships, resistance in the communities and subcultures we created, whether at lesbian bars and drag clubs or within hostile institutions like prisons and the military, and resistance in the care we freely offered to one another. The practice of queer history, for me, is not about a timeline of significant historical events but rather the study of the daily lives of everyday people.

H-HD: The raid of the Pussy Palace on 14 September 2000 is such an important event in the history of queer women as well as the history of North America's understanding of police brutality. I remember specifically telling the story of this to a very reluctant group that seemed to baulk at my criticism of the police throughout my presentation, and I was able to watch it specifically sink in for two white queer women that this larger discussion of police violence, that is largely led by Black voices, is very relevant to the queer community, not only in solidarity and intersectionality but just in simple practicality.

KL: I think something like the 'sewing circle' would probably be of interest to a lot of people. This was during the golden age of Hollywood, from the 1920s to the 1950s and involved many female film stars. The 'sewing circle', as it was called, was basically a group of women who got together with other women. A lot of people at the time were aware of it, although it was very underground. However, I think a lot of people today would be surprised to hear that it's thought the likes of Katharine Hepburn, Tallulah Bankhead and Greta Garbo were all among a group of major Hollywood starlets who were sleeping with each other.

In what ways have historical stories of queer women been silenced?

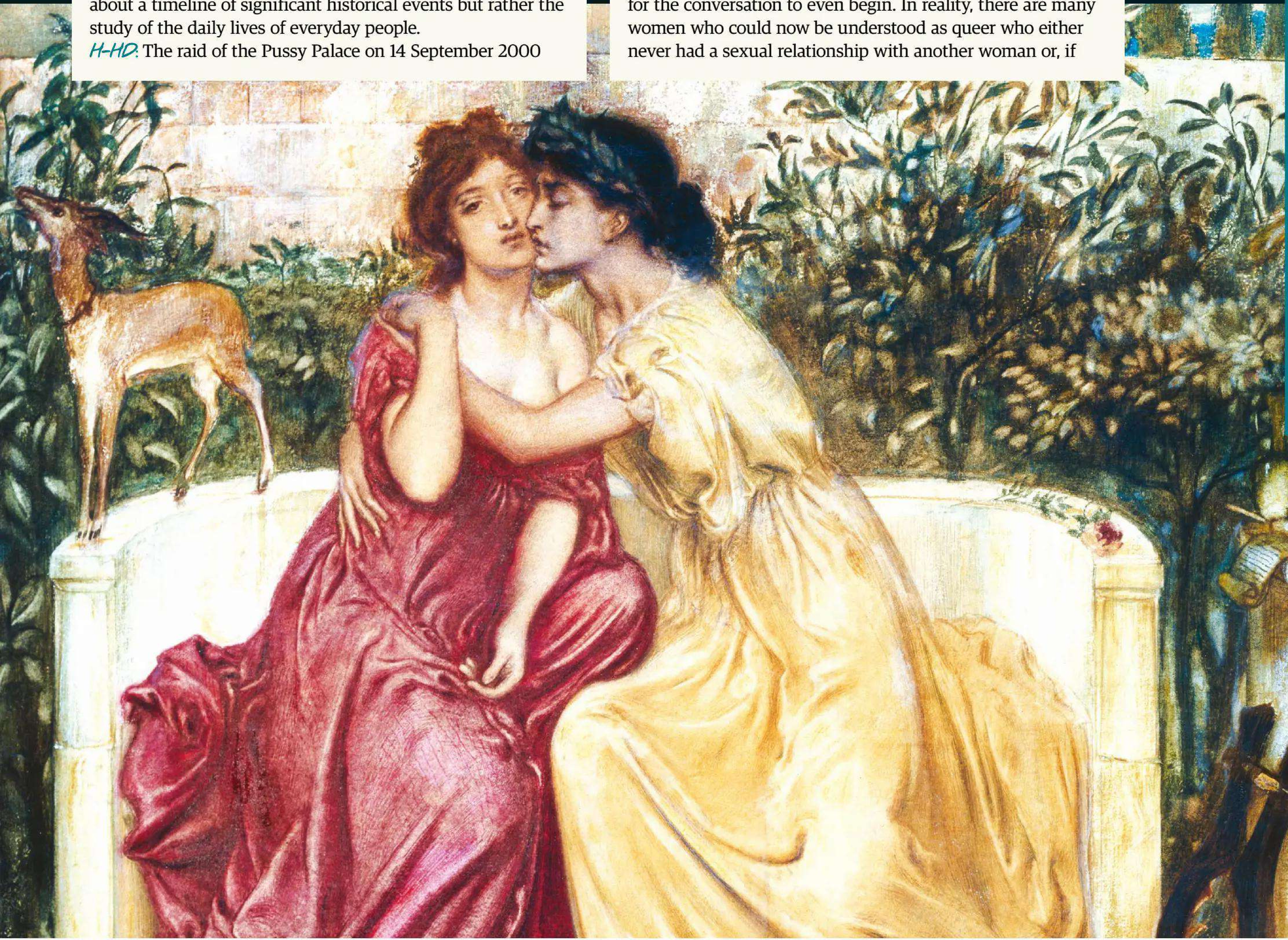
H-HD: One of the biggest ways of silencing the stories of queer women historically is dismissing any relationship they may have had as friendship. There is this prevailing idea that there needs to be explicit evidence of a sexual relationship for the conversation to even begin. In reality, there are many women who could now be understood as queer who either never had a sexual relationship with another woman or, if

RIGHT Greta Garbo, the star of many 'old Hollywood' classics, was known for her relationships with women

BELOW Greek poet Sappho's writing has cemented her as a queer icon

BELOW-RIGHT Two women, dressed in male attire, perform a mock proposal. Possibly one of a number of photographs of lesbian couples taken during the 19th century and early 20th, when photography was in its infancy as an artform

BOTTOM-RIGHT *Love A La Mode, Or Two Dear Friends*, a satirical print from 1820 depicting Ladies Strachan and Warwick. Their 'friendship' was the subject of gossip during the period



> "The practice of queer history, for me, is not about a timeline of significant historical events but rather the study of the daily lives of everyday people"
> Amelia Possanza

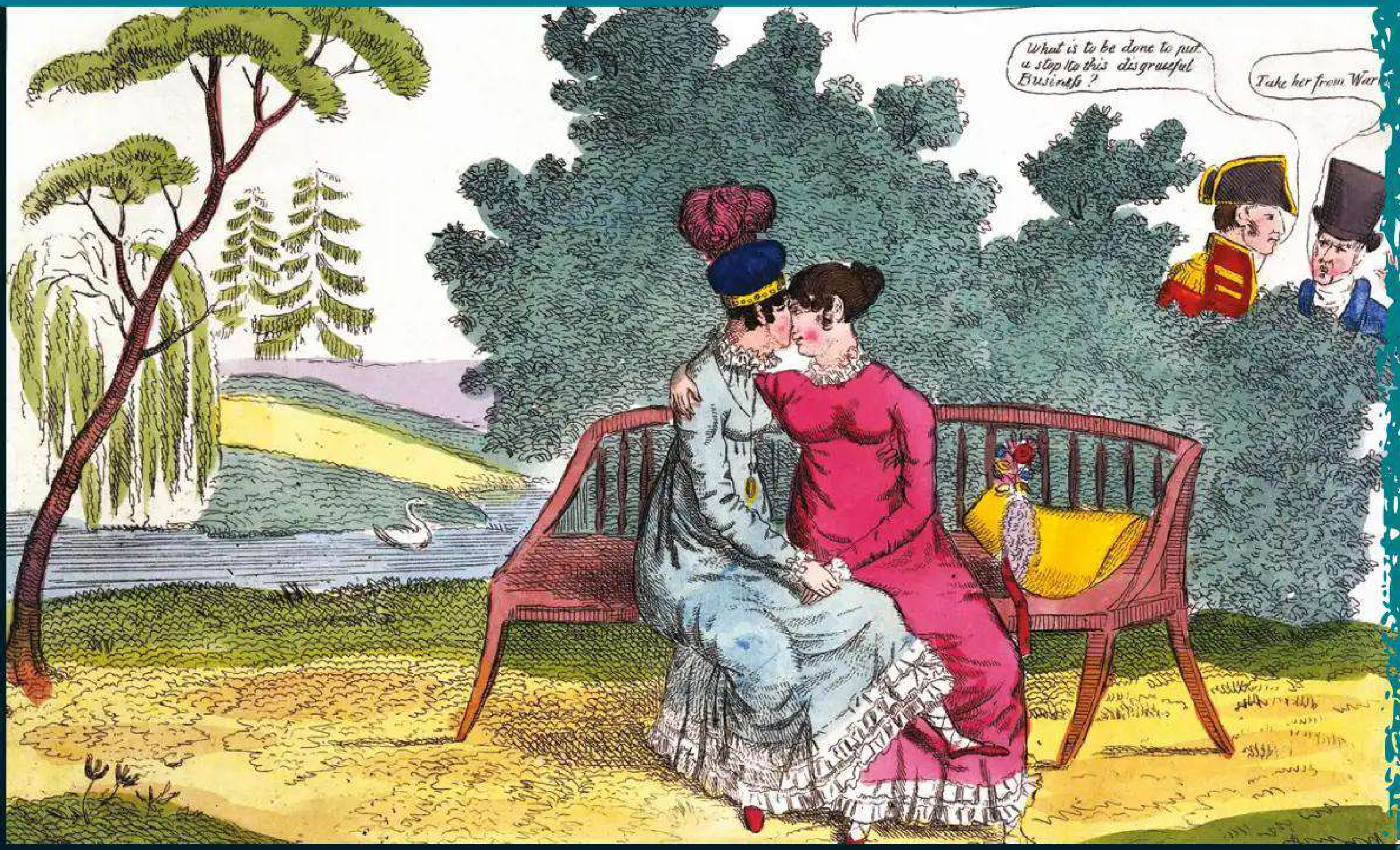
they did, actively hid the evidence. As asexuality continues to enter the queer conversation, the former possibility becomes less of a reason to dismiss discussions of queerness at all and more of a reason to look deeper, to find the roots.

It is complicated with queer women in particular because women as a group have historically been placed as both representing lust and not having any sexuality to speak of. So to even have the conversation there is so much historical pressure to try and unknot.

AP: Much of the historical record that remains of queer women's lives before the mid-20th century is filtered through the lens of institutions that were at best unkind and at worst violent toward them. Their stories from these eras often come to us in the form of prison records or salacious newspaper headlines, documents that treated queer people as subjects rather than authors. In some cases there are personal letters or diaries, but even then, the writers often had to hold back some of the most intimate details for fear of getting caught. I'm still amazed, though, by the way that queer people still found each other and formed relationships, taking incredible risks in spite of these circumstances.

LJR: The major way they have been silenced is through lack of evidence from women themselves. Sometimes this is because women have, throughout time, been less likely to be literate or to have left other kinds of public records. If they were literate, their writings were less likely to have been considered important enough to be saved. Sometimes women destroyed evidence themselves out of fear, burning their own love letters. And then there is silencing through denial: "They were just friends."

KL: Well, I think the most obvious answer is that we live in a heteronormative world, right? Heterosexuality is the default but when there is evidence to the contrary, historians overlook it. Obviously, it might be subconsciously, I'm not saying historians do this on purpose. But throughout history, historians have chosen to remove certain things, especially regarding women and not just their queerness. We live in a patriarchal society, women are always the minority when compared to men. One of the best examples is that a woman's partner is described only as "the roommate". They're always just roommates. I was recently researching novelist Willa Cather and she lived with her partner for nearly 40 years. A lot of letters etc were destroyed, but some in which they refer to each other as lovers survive, not to mention they were buried together. If that was a heterosexual couple, I think historians would automatically assume they were in a relationship but instead they've been referred to as friends and roommates.


What is to be done to put a stop to this disgraceful Busineſs ?
Take her from War

Are there any stories of particular queer women that have inspired you?

H-HD: Jackie Shane is a name I have to mention because just imagine it, the story of a transgender woman of colour ▶

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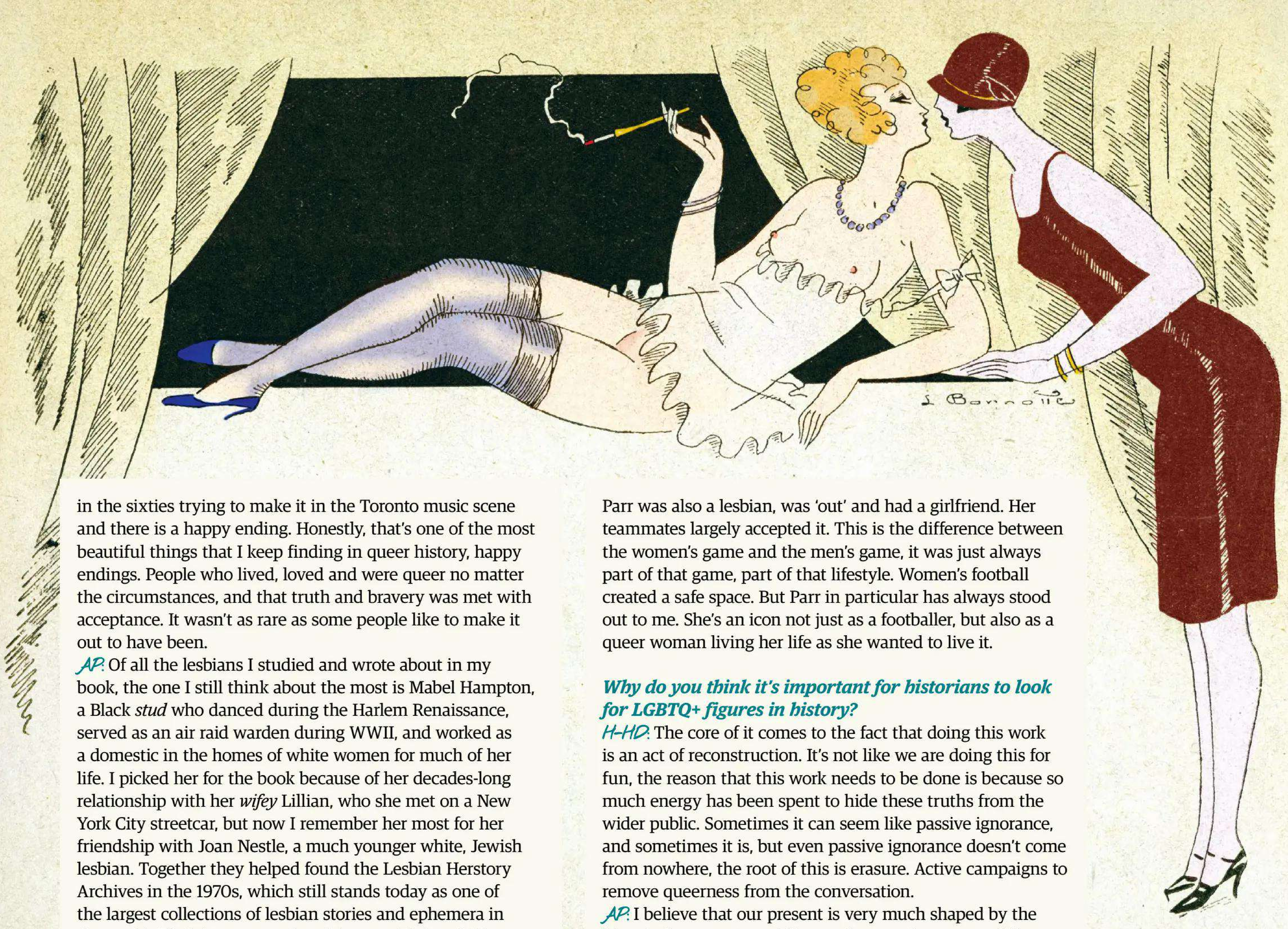


in the sixties trying to make it in the Toronto music scene and there is a happy ending. Honestly, that's one of the most beautiful things that I keep finding in queer history, happy endings. People who lived, loved and were queer no matter the circumstances, and that truth and bravery was met with acceptance. It wasn't as rare as some people like to make it out to have been.

AP: Of all the lesbians I studied and wrote about in my book, the one I still think about the most is Mabel Hampton, a Black *stud* who danced during the Harlem Renaissance, served as an air raid warden during WWII, and worked as a domestic in the homes of white women for much of her life. I picked her for the book because of her decades-long relationship with her *wifey* Lillian, who she met on a New York City streetcar, but now I remember her most for her friendship with Joan Nestle, a much younger white, Jewish lesbian. Together they helped found the Lesbian Herstory Archives in the 1970s, which still stands today as one of the largest collections of lesbian stories and ephemera in the world. Their intergenerational, interracial, interfaith friendship is one of the greatest love stories I've ever read! Mabel was fond of saying: "The dead take care of me, and so do the living."

LJR: There are so many stories that have inspired me. One that played a role in my own coming out is the story of Molly Hallock Foote and her friend Helena, who met in New York in 1868. In an early letter to Helena about time spent together, Molly wrote, "Those two or three days so dark without, so bright with firelight and contentment within I shall always remember as proof that, for a time, at least—I fancy for quite a long time—we might be sufficient for each other. Imagine yourself kissed many times by one who loved you so dearly." As their relationship deepened, they made plans to live together. Molly announced that she loved Helena but not long after, Helena decided to marry, prompting Molly to write to Helena's fiancé, stating, "until you came along I believe that she loved me almost as girls love their lovers. I know I loved her so. Don't you wonder that I can stand the sight of you."

This was only one of dozens of examples of intense, loving, intimate relationships, known as "romantic friendships," that have come to light in the correspondence of women in the Euroamerican world. As Molly's forthrightness in addressing Helena's fiancé makes clear, such friendships were accepted, even admired, as long as they didn't cross the lines of respectability by hinting at actual sexual relationships.

KL: There's a footballer, Lily Parr, who played during the 1930s and 1940s. She was really tall, had jet black hair and smoked cigarettes while playing football. She's just been inducted into the National Football Hall of Fame and once kicked a ball so hard she broke a male goalkeeper's arm. But Parr was also a lesbian, was 'out' and had a girlfriend. Her teammates largely accepted it. This is the difference between the women's game and the men's game, it was just always part of that game, part of that lifestyle. Women's football created a safe space. But Parr in particular has always stood out to me. She's an icon not just as a footballer, but also as a queer woman living her life as she wanted to live it.

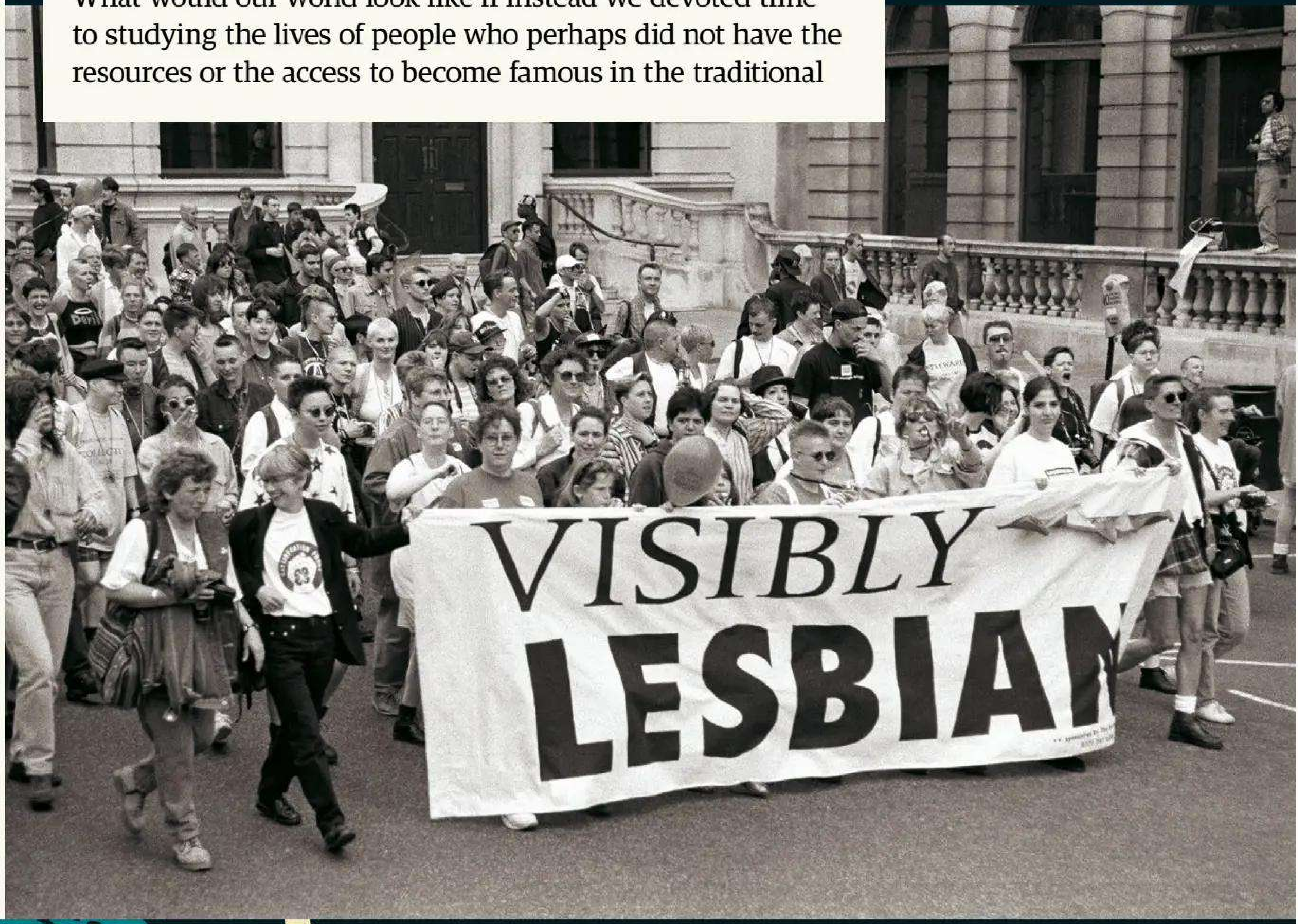
Why do you think it's important for historians to look for LGBTQ+ figures in history?

H-HD: The core of it comes to the fact that doing this work is an act of reconstruction. It's not like we are doing this for fun, the reason that this work needs to be done is because so much energy has been spent to hide these truths from the wider public. Sometimes it can seem like passive ignorance, and sometimes it is, but even passive ignorance doesn't come from nowhere, the root of this is erasure. Active campaigns to remove queerness from the conversation.

AP: I believe that our present is very much shaped by the historical moments and figures that we choose to uplift in school textbooks and on movie screens. These people become examples of how we define fame and success in our culture, and they become role models that we try to emulate in our own lives. Since we've filled these pages with presidents and battles and movie stars, it's not much of a surprise that our present moment looks the way it does. What would our world look like if instead we devoted time to studying the lives of people who perhaps did not have the resources or the access to become famous in the traditional

ABOVE A 1925 illustration of a lesbian couple in bed from the French satirical magazine *Le Sourire*

BELOW A group of protestors at the 1995 London Pride March



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> "Every day the study of queer women in history is pushing forward the thing that matters most, truth"
> Harper-Hugo Darling

way, but instead, from the margins, devoted themselves to care work and mutual aid and community organising?

LJR: An obvious answer is that LGBTQ+ people in the present deserve a history that helps to make sense of our lives and loves. But it is also the case that LGBTQ+ history helps us to understand the myriad of ways that societies throughout time have understood and shaped desire, love, and sexual behaviour. The example of romantic friendship shows that what we think of as sexually repressed Victorian society actually allowed more leeway for intimate same-sex relationships. Acknowledging the importance of the history of sexuality – acknowledging that sexuality HAS a history – is vital for history.

KL: Without queerness in history, you can't see that people like you existed. I adored history as a child but I never saw myself in it. And if you don't think you exist in the past, you don't think you exist in the present and you certainly don't think you have a future. It's incredibly dangerous to not include queer women and queer history. For young people, without that representation, they just don't exist. There was an incredible sense of shame that I felt as a child. I think a lot of people my age and older felt the same, because we never saw ourselves. It can affect your mental health and be incredibly dangerous and damaging. Even today, you open a history book at school and you're not going to learn about queer history. Obviously in some schools yes, it depends on the teachers. But there are talks of a return to Section 28 or similar policies being brought back. We live in a very scary world at the moment, especially for trans people and trans kids, so it's really important to have that representation.

What are your hopes for the future study of the history of queer women?

LJR: I hope that scholars around the world will uncover new evidence about queer women that expands our knowledge of all the ways that women have loved and desired other women. I think of the discovery of amazing sources and of what we have learned about romantic friendship, female husbands, butch-fem relationships, and so much more. I hope that we continue to discover new evidence from the mouths and pens of women and craft new interpretations that help us to make sense of the varied ways that women have loved women across the ages.

KL: I would love queer history to be included in schools, in any way. I would love for history to remain a chronological timeline, but be as inclusive as possible. For example, everybody learns about Anne Frank in UK schools, but we are not taught that there was a part in her diary where she mentioned being attracted to one of her female friends. The reference was taken out by her father but if that had been included in a history book, it wouldn't have to be the main focus, it would have been amazing to see that someone then was a little bit like me. That's what I would like.

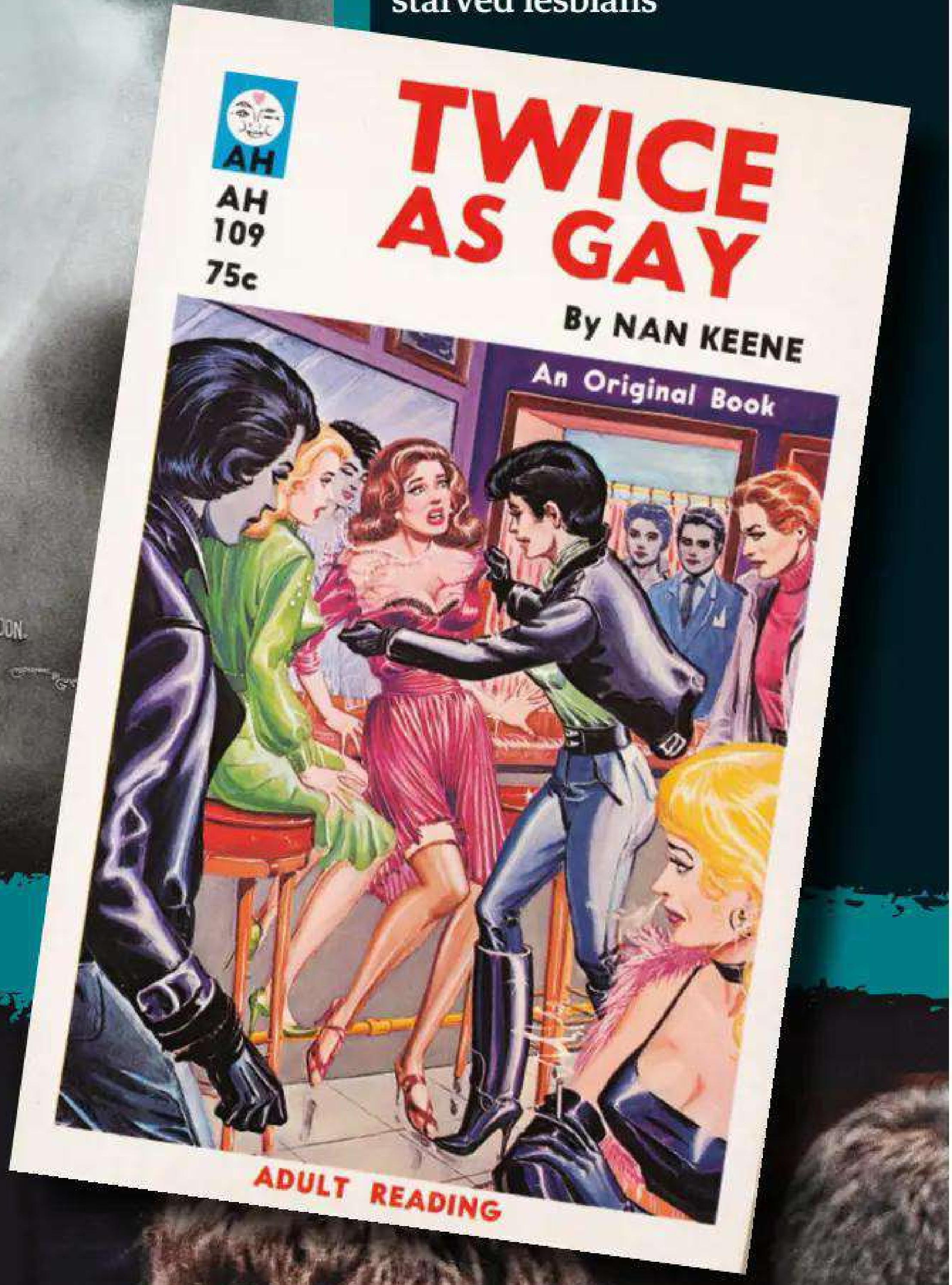
H-HD: Every day the study of queer women in history is pushing forward the thing that matters most, truth. In the face of misinformation, erasure, and ignorance, truth continues to be the best and only antidote.

AP: My main hope is simply that there is more study of queer communities, past and present. The more books and movies and TV shows (and reality TV shows!) that we have about the queer community, the less pressure there will be on any one singular story to represent the diversity and complexity of the queer community, and how queerness intersects with so many other identities. To sum it up, I want more lesbians! ○

The Honeymoon.

LEFT An 1890 photograph entitled *The Honeymoon*, part of a movement of 'sapphic' art during the 19th century

BELOW From 1950 to 1965 over five hundred lesbian themed 'pulp novels' were published in the United States. Many were homophobic, but others were written by women and provided a reference for culturally starved lesbians



RIGHT A couple embraces at the 1982 New York City Pride March

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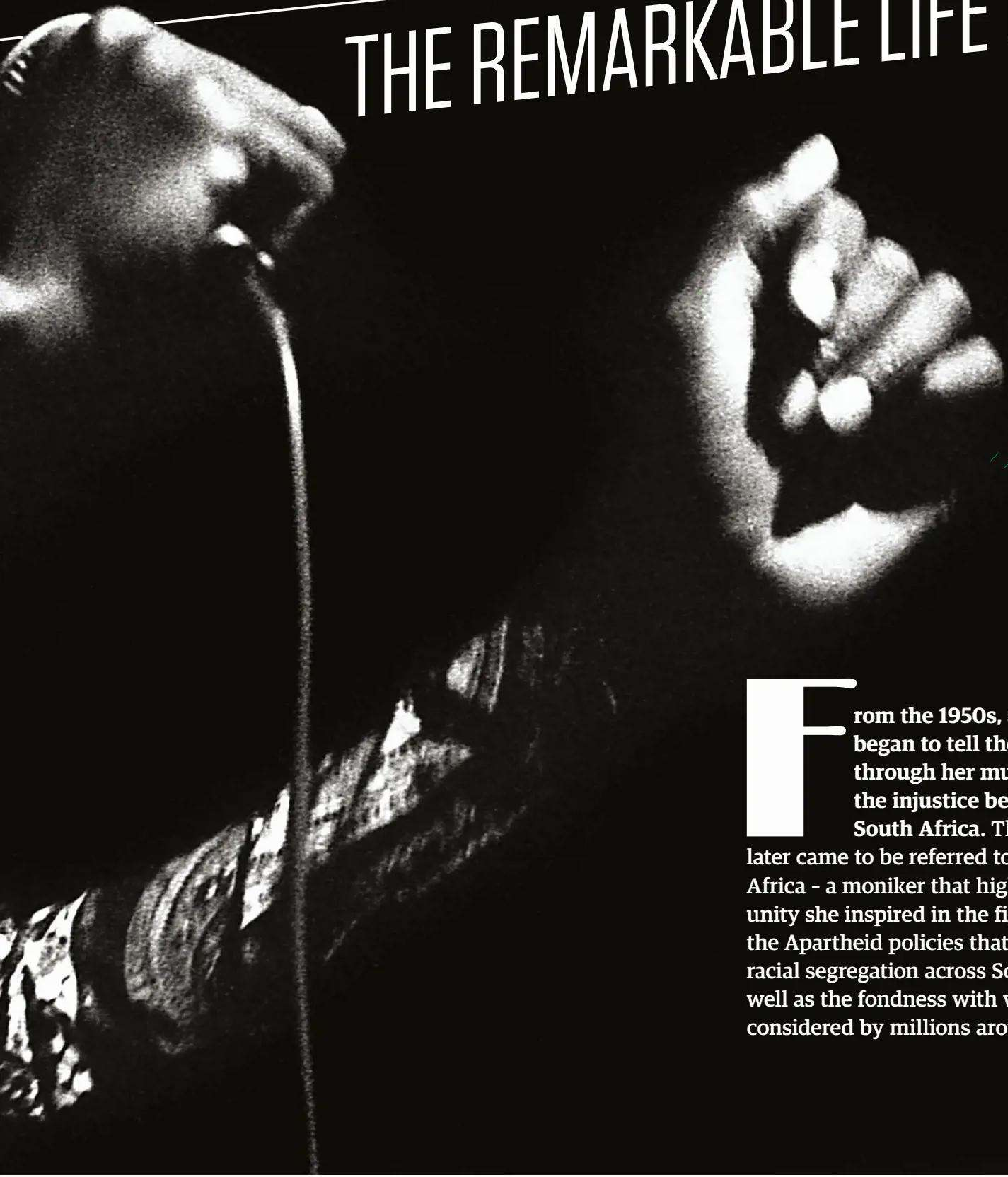
MAMA AFRICA

THE REMARKABLE LIFE OF MIRIAM MAKEBA

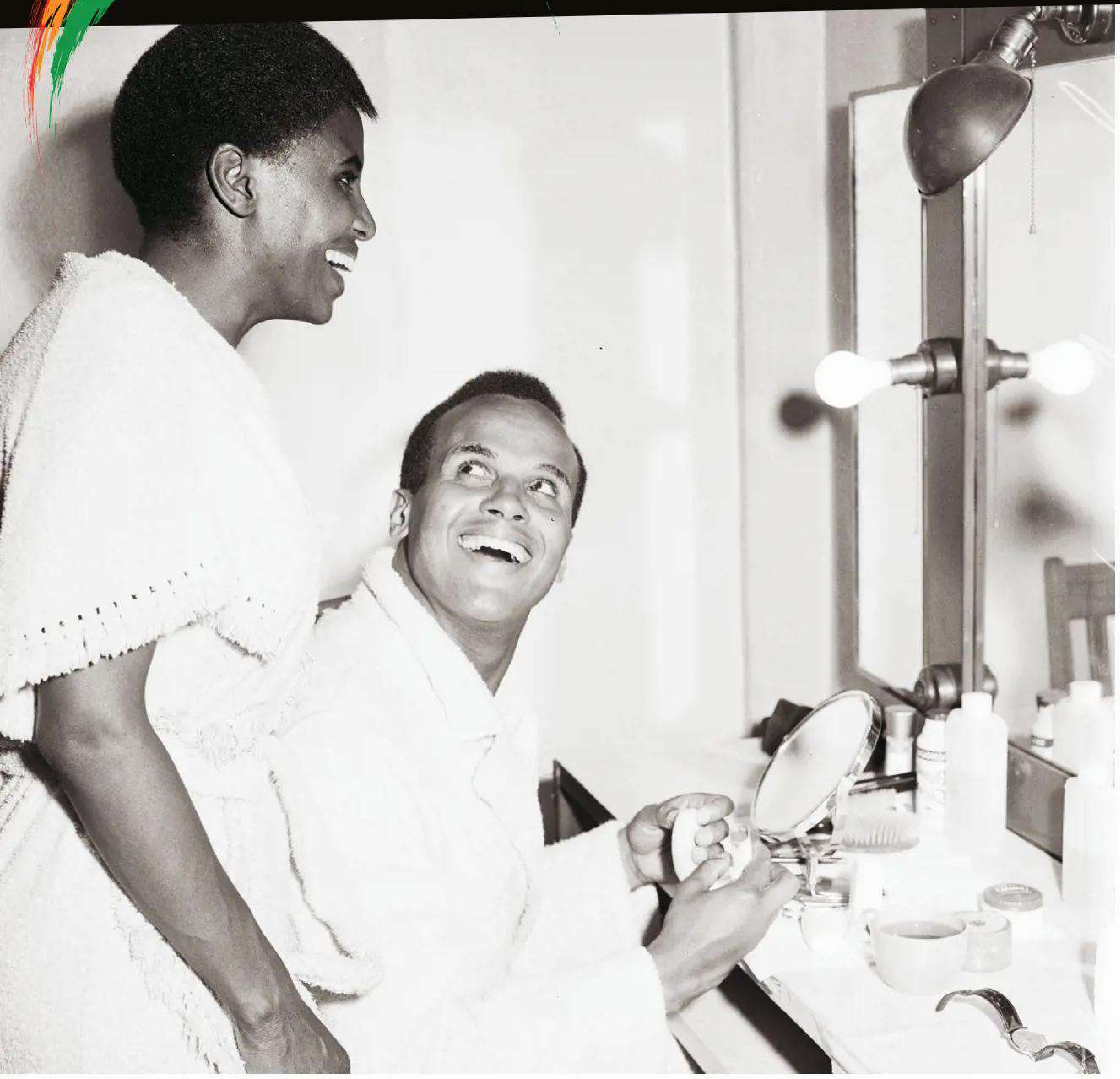
Written by Emily Staniforth



Uncover the life of the South African songstress whose activism challenged racism and injustice around the world

From the 1950s, a singer began to tell the world through her music about the injustice being faced in South Africa. This woman later came to be referred to as Mama Africa – a moniker that highlighted the unity she inspired in the fight against the Apartheid policies that enforced racial segregation across South Africa, as well as the fondness with which she was considered by millions around the world.

During her lifetime, Miriam Makeba rose to prominence and brought the fight of Black South Africans to the forefront of the international consciousness, while also introducing and exposing the Western world to African culture and music. She was honoured by numerous world leaders, met with the Pope on several occasions and became the first African recording artist to win a Grammy. The extent of Makeba's political, personal and cultural achievements cannot be ▶



LEFT American singer Harry Belafonte acted as a mentor to Miriam, and their 1965 album *An Evening with Belafonte/Makeba* won a Grammy

RIGHT Makeba is also remembered as 'The Empress of African Song', credited for bringing African music to an international audience

FAR-RIGHT This photo of Makeba was taken while she was rehearsing for a concert in Hamburg

entirely collated here, but delving into the life of such an extraordinary woman is necessary to bring attention to just some of the impact she made.

EARLY LIFE

From the very first weeks of Zenzile Miriam Makeba's life, she experienced hardship. Born in 1932 in Prospect Township, near Johannesburg, Makeba was only alive for 18 days before she ended up in prison. Her mother, Nomkomndelo Christina Makeba, was arrested for brewing and selling homemade beer, known as umqombothi, and as the family were not wealthy enough to be able to pay the fine for such a crime, Christina had to serve six months in jail. With her daughter a newborn, Miriam went with her, spending the first months of her life imprisoned.

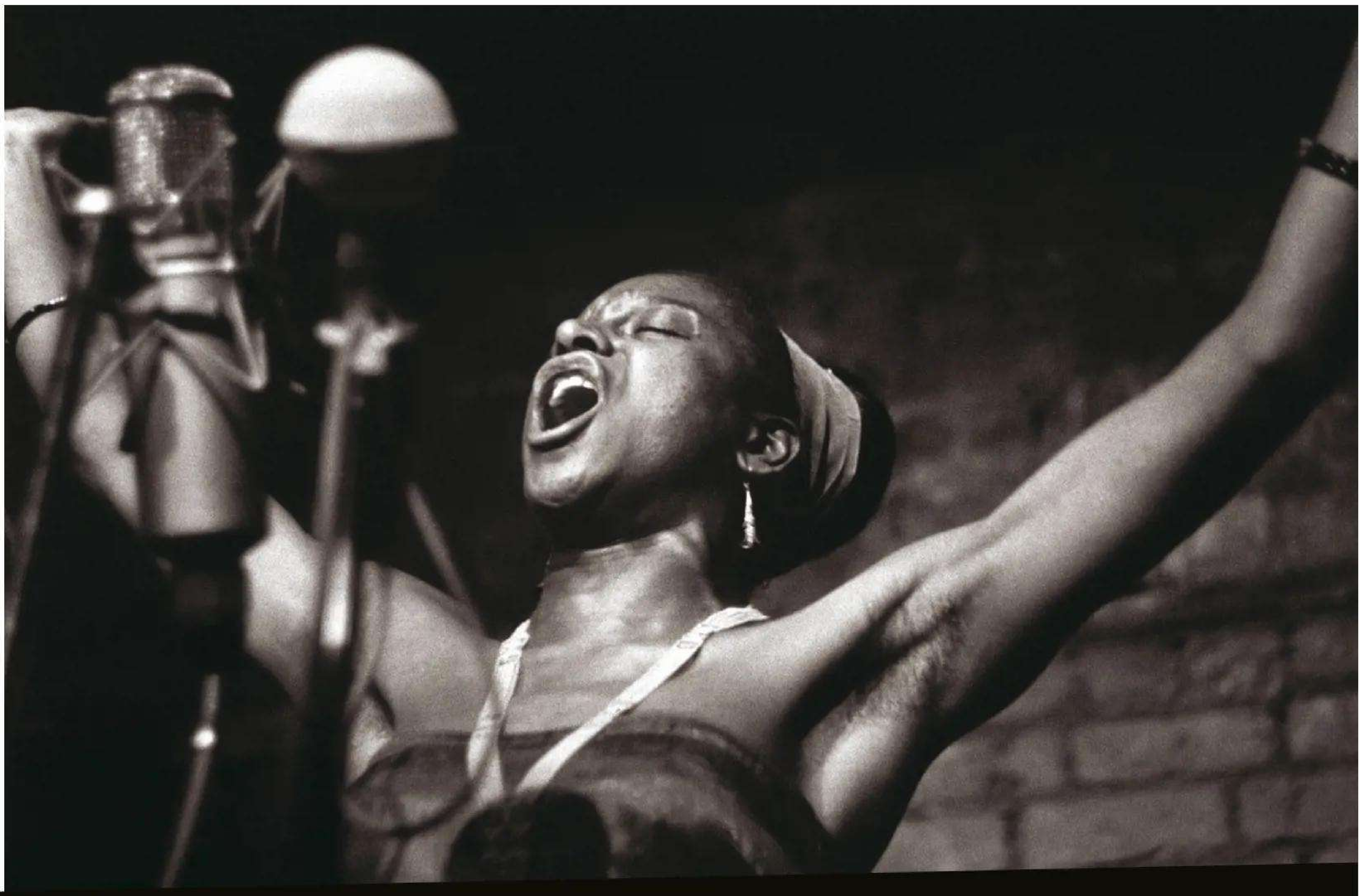
By the time Christina was released from prison, Miriam's father Mpambane Caswell Makeba had obtained a job working for Shell Oil, and the family moved to Nelspruit in the north east of South Africa. However, Miriam moved once again after her father died when she was five years old. This time, she moved in with her grandmother in Pretoria. Makeba's childhood was characterised by poverty, and she began to work from an early age helping her mother in her job as a domestic worker. During this period, she discovered her talent and passion when she started singing at her local church. It was clear that Makeba was talented and in 1947, at the age of 15, she was selected to perform her first solo during the Royal Visit of King George VI, Queen Elizabeth and their daughters Elizabeth (the future Elizabeth II) and Margaret to South Africa. However, the performance never came about, and Makeba had to wait for another opportunity to pursue her dream.

BEGINNING OF A MUSIC CAREER

In 1948, the situation for Makeba and all other Black South Africans changed drastically when Apartheid was introduced. Discriminatory segregation policies meant that for an aspiring Black artist like Makeba, her dream of singing became harder to reach. But Makeba was up to the challenge.

Ambitious and in her late teens, Makeba should have been in the perfect situation to launch her singing career. However, Miriam's life had taken a turn in a different direction when at the age of 17 she gave birth to her first and only child with her first husband: a daughter she named Angela Sibongile Makeba who came to be known as Bongi. Not long after Bongi's birth, Makeba was diagnosed with breast cancer and was treated for the illness by her mother, who as well as being a domestic worker was also a practitioner of traditional herbal medicine. Fortunately, Makeba survived the cancer diagnosis, but her marriage did not. Her husband left her after only two years of being wed.

Now, Makeba was a divorced teenage single mother recovering from serious illness. For many people those circumstances would hardly seem conducive to beginning a singing career from scratch. But Makeba was more resilient than most and not about to give up on her dream. She had started to sing



BELOW Makeba singing in Greenwich Village, New York in 1961

> **“SHE DISCOVERED HER TALENT AND PASSION WHEN SHE STARTED SINGING AT HER LOCAL CHURCH”**

with a group called the Cuban Brothers, but in 1954 her career really took off when she bagged a spot singing with the South African jazz group the Manhattan Brothers. Makeba’s voice began to become recognisable and popular in her home nation and she became part of another group, an all-female ensemble called the Skylarks, while the Manhattan Brothers toured internationally. It wasn’t long before Makeba joined the Manhattan Brothers abroad, however, and she toured Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Congo with the band.

Appearances in two successful films ensured Makeba became an international star. In 1959, a small part (playing herself) in the drama-documentary *Come Back, Africa* saw Makeba first align herself with the anti-Apartheid movement and her second role in *King Kong*, released in the same year, again showcased Makeba’s singing talents. A musical jazz opera, *King Kong* featured Makeba alongside the Manhattan Brothers as well as South African jazz musician Hugh Masekela, who Makeba would later marry in 1964.

Due to her role in *Come Back, Africa*, Makeba was invited to the Venice Film Festival in 1959. The trip proved to be extremely significant for Makeba, who after attending the event decided that she would not return to South Africa, and instead set about creating a life for herself in the US. However, her involvement in *Come Back, Africa* would return to haunt Makeba shortly after her relocation.

Settling in America was briefly interrupted by a short visit to London, UK. There, Makeba first met Harry Belafonte, the hugely popular American singer who had turned his hand to acting and producing for television. Belafonte quickly became Makeba’s biggest and most influential supporter, and he has been credited with launching Makeba’s incredibly successful career in the US. Belafonte had contacts and experience, and came to be valued by Makeba as an adviser. Under his counsel, she shot to stardom in America, seemingly overnight. Her reputation soared and she quickly became known for introducing South African music to a Western audience.

EXILE FROM SOUTH AFRICA

Despite her fame and success in the States, Makeba had not turned her back on her home nation and in 1960, when tragedy struck and Makeba’s mother died, she intended to return home for the funeral. But Makeba was stunned to discover that during her short time in America, her passport had been revoked by the South African government in response to the negative depiction of the government and Apartheid in *Come Back, Africa*. At the time, Makeba’s young daughter was still in South Africa but she later travelled out to the US to live with her mother. Enraged at the decision to invalidate her passport, Makeba became much more vocal in her ▶

MIRIAM MAKEBA STR
STOP ABUSE
ZULU

MAKEBA’S ACTIVISM

What other causes did Mama Africa support?

Although Makeba is most well-known for her anti-Apartheid stance and her support for the civil rights movement in America, her political and philanthropic interests and opinions extended much further.

Makeba was vocal on the subject of independence for many African countries who were still under colonial rule. As a result she was invited to perform at several concerts to celebrate independence in a variety of African nations throughout her career. She has also been awarded a number of prizes for her efforts towards peace and understanding around the world.

Setting up a foundation in her own name, Makeba also campaigned for many charitable endeavours. The Makeba Centre for Girls was established to care for young South African girls who had been the victims of abuse. She also worked to help child soldiers and children suffering from HIV and AIDS. In 1999, Makeba was made a Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations.

All images: © Alamy, © Getty Images

views on Apartheid, frequently writing and singing impassioned songs about the subject. Her anger was commented on by Belafonte who told Makeba to be more subtle in her tirade against Apartheid: "You have such great talent, you must try not to be a tornado - be like a submarine." Makeba said she took this advice onboard when she testified at the United Nations for the first time in 1963 (she would speak at the UN several more times) speaking out against Apartheid. But as a result of these defiant actions, her South African citizenship was later also rescinded.

Speaking to Robin Denselow at *The Guardian* in 2008, Makeba did not appear to consider herself a political artist and remained confused at her exile from South Africa. "I still don't know why they banned me... I said to them, 'What did I do? I never killed anybody. I was never arrested for anything bad, so why can't I go home?'... And I'm not a political singer... I don't know what the word means. People think I consciously decided to tell the world what was happening in South Africa. No! I was singing about my life, and in South Africa we always sang about what was happening to us - especially the things that hurt us."

> "THERE'S NOBODY IN AFRICA WHO MADE THE WORLD MORE AWARE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN SOUTH AFRICA THAN MIRIAM MAKEBA"

AMERICA AND CIVIL RIGHTS

After Makeba was not allowed to return to South Africa, her music was also banned in the country. However, her career continued to go from strength to strength internationally. In 1962 she performed with Belafonte for President Kennedy at Madison Square Garden at the infamous birthday event where Marilyn Monroe serenaded the President - Makeba was brushing shoulders with the most famous performers in 1960s America. She continued to sing about the plight of Black South Africans and began to use her voice to advocate for cases of racial injustice around the world.

With Belafonte as her mentor, Makeba was exposed to the civil rights movement in the USA which was gaining momentum. He had long been involved in the fight for equality and introduced Makeba to key figures in the civil rights battle, including Martin Luther King Jr. Shocked that African Americans were also facing discrimination and inequality, Makeba recognised parallels to the situation she had been a victim of in South Africa.

Makeba's popularity in the US can be partly attributed to the impact her music had on African Americans who recognised something of their own fight in her songs about South Africa. Her third husband Hugh Masekela, who Makeba had divorced by 1966 after only two years of marriage but with whom she remained great friends, said of her appeal: "There's nobody in Africa who made the world more aware of what was happening in South Africa than Miriam Makeba. This was because of the way in which she described the songs... unwittingly she educated African-American artists."

In showing her support for the civil rights movement in America, Makeba became associated with more radical activism than that preached by Martin Luther King. In 1967 she first met Stokely Carmichael, a prominent civil rights campaigner who had begun his involvement in the fight for equality believing in the popular doctrine of non-violent protest. However, Carmichael had gradually become disillusioned with the

TOP-LEFT Radical activist Stokely Carmichael married Makeba in 1968

MIDDLE-LEFT Makeba was welcomed home to South Africa after being exiled for over 30 years

BOTTOM-LEFT Makeba was invited back to South Africa by Nelson Mandela in 1990. She is pictured here with his wife Winnie

BOTTOM Makeba during a performance in Zurich, 1969

policy of nonviolence after he witnessed the relentless brutality with which Black people were being treated by white police officers. In 1966 he addressed a group of volunteers from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) at Greenwood, Mississippi saying: “We’ve been saying ‘freedom’ for six years. What we are going to start saying now is ‘Black Power’.” The phrase Black Power quickly came to be associated with the Black separatist movement. This made him a divisive figure as Black moderates found his cause to be detrimental to the civil rights movement for equality, while white Americans were concerned about the impact of the Black Power movement.

EXPULSION FROM AMERICA

After meeting in Guinea, Makeba married Carmichael in 1968. This decision would have a huge impact on her life and career as the music industry in America began to cut her off. In her 2008 interview, Makeba said: “It was a cancellation by people who felt I should not be with Stokely because he was a rebel to them. I didn’t care about that. He was somebody I loved, who loved me, and it was my life”.

With her husband considered dangerous in the US, the couple decided to move permanently to Guinea. There, Makeba flourished as she recorded new music over the 15 years in which she remained in the country. Having been exiled from South Africa and now unwelcome in America, Makeba was once again stateless. However, her universal popularity saw her granted honorary citizenship of ten different countries, which included Guinea and Ghana.

During this time, her songs became critical of America’s racial policies as well as South Africa’s. In 1973 her marriage to Carmichael ended and it wasn’t until 1987 that she would finally return to the US.

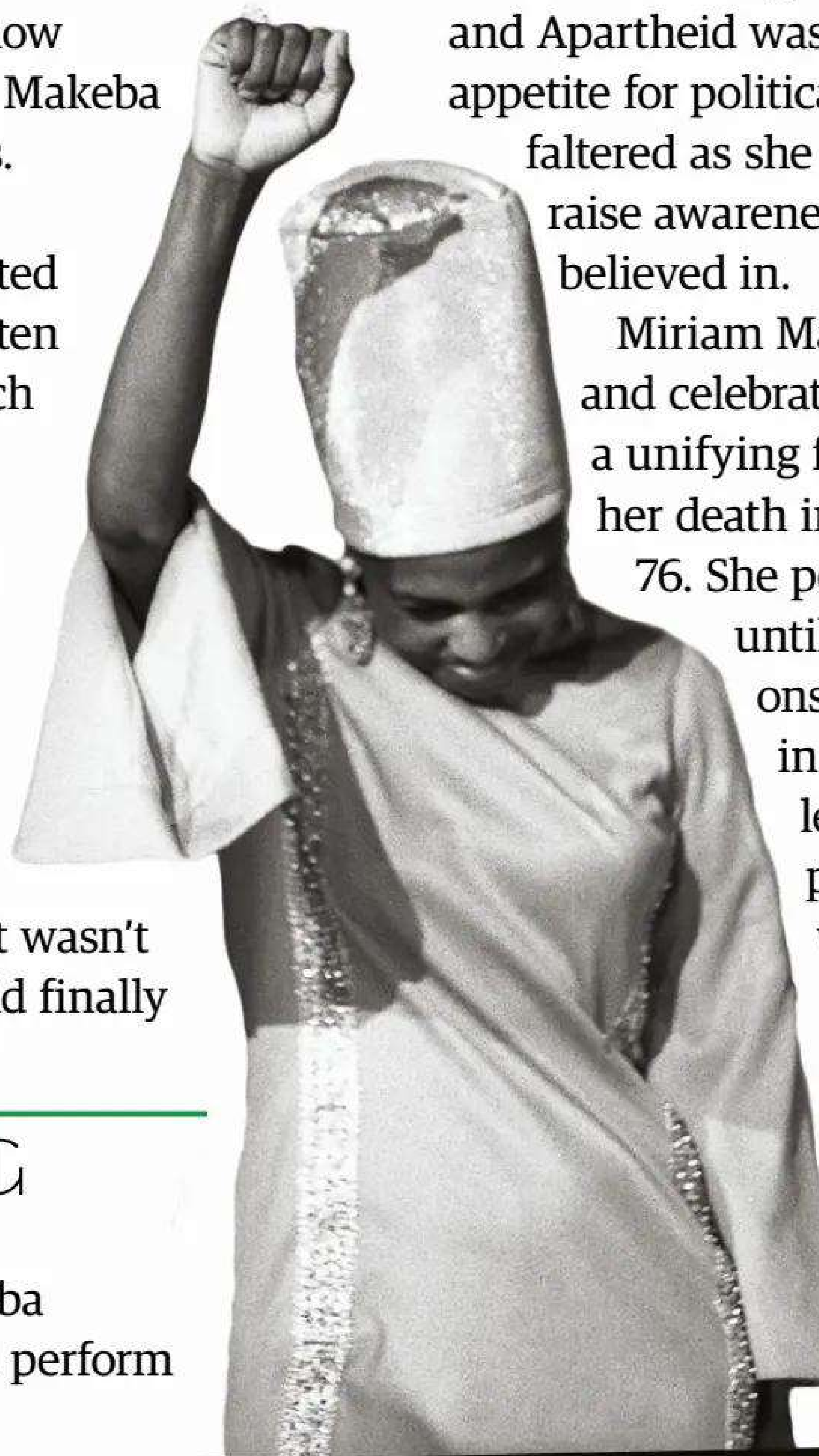
RETURNING HOME

During the 1980s, Makeba continued to record and perform all over the world. Her return to the States saw her take part in Paul Simon’s Graceland tour, and her popularity skyrocketed in America once again. But in terms of Makeba’s personal life, the 80s were a particularly difficult time for the singer. In 1985, her daughter Bongi, who had also been living in Guinea, died during childbirth. It was her daughter’s death that contributed to Makeba’s decision to leave Guinea, taking with her Bongi’s two children. Furthermore, Makeba was also diagnosed with cervical cancer in the 1980s, as well as struggling with alcohol addiction.

Nevertheless, she continued to work and in 1990 Makeba received some extremely welcome news. Nelson Mandela had finally been freed from prison and Apartheid was on its way out. Upon his release, Mandela, who had briefly met Makeba when she was singing with the Manhattan Brothers many years ago, asked her to return to her home country. After over 30 years in exile, Makeba could go home.

When Makeba flew back to South Africa, she was greeted warmly. However, as her music had been banned for so long, many South Africans were unaware of who she was or the role that she had played in raising awareness of the struggle against Apartheid internationally. Despite this, Makeba performed again in South Africa from 1991, while continuing to tour around the world. Though she was growing older and Apartheid was abolished, Makeba’s appetite for political activism never faltered as she continued to work and raise awareness for the causes she believed in.

Miriam Makeba was remembered and celebrated as Mama Africa, a unifying force for good, upon her death in 2008 at the age of 76. She performed right up until her death, collapsing onstage during a concert in Naples, Italy. Her legacy survives in the political and charitable work she engaged in throughout her long and tumultuous life, as well as in the catalogue of songs that continue to inspire new generations.



MIRIAM MAKEBA
PATA PATA
STEREO
reprise
ACADEMIE CHARLES CROS PARIS
GRAND PRIX DU DISQUE

MAMA AFRICA’S HITS

A roundup of Makeba’s most famous and influential songs

PATA PATA (1967)

Arguably Makeba’s most well-known song, *Pata Pata* became an international hit. Originally written and sung in the Xhosa language, *Pata Pata* is a joyful song inspired by the dance of the same name popular in townships of Johannesburg.

SOWETO BLUES (1977)

Soweto Blues was written by Hugh Masekela in response to the terrible events of the Soweto Uprising in 1976, in which hundreds of young people were killed during protests. Makeba sang Masekela’s lyrics and the song became an important stand against Apartheid.

THE CLICK SONG (1963)

A traditional Xhosa song, *The Click Song* became a popular part of Makeba’s repertoire when she first recorded her own version. The original Xhosa title of the track is *Qongqothwane*, but was changed as Western audiences struggled to pronounce it.

MALAIKA (C.1964)

Makeba recorded the traditional Swahili love song *Malaika Nakupenda Malaika*, known as *Malaika*, some time in the 1960s. She was first taught the song backstage at a concert in San Francisco by a Kenyan student.

A LUTA CONTINUA (C.1975)

Meaning ‘the struggle continues’ in English, the phrase *A Luta Continua* was used during the war for independence in Mozambique. Miriam Makeba’s daughter Bongi wrote the song for her mother to sing after she was invited to Mozambique’s independence ceremony.

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MYTHS, LEGENDS & TALES

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People lived in fear of hearing the banshee's wail as it was an omen of death

IRISH FOLKLORE

From leprechauns to banshees, Ireland's mystical creatures hold a special place in the country's identity and physical landscape

Written by Emily Staniforth

The Emerald Isle boasts a huge and eclectic array of mystical creatures that have come to define Ireland's long and magical history. The country's folklore is rich and complex, with stories of fairies and leprechauns having been circulated and passed down through generations in the oral tradition. This means many of the tales that make up Irish legends have different versions that vary and differ from place to place and through time. These stories, however, are held close to the hearts of the Irish people, and traversing Ireland's broad and varied landscape highlights just how ingrained these folkloric traditions have become in their identity.

Tuatha Dé Danann and the Aos Sí

The creature that appears most frequently and is most ingrained in Irish folklore and history is the fairy. Referred to in Irish as the Aos Sí, fairies have a long and illustrious history on the island, with their story beginning way back in ancient times when the Tuatha Dé Danann, a tribe of people said to have supernatural powers, were supposedly some of the original dwellers of Ireland. They lived an existence of battling other rival groups of the island, including the Fomorians, but always managed to end up on top. However, when the Milesians arrived on the shores of the country, they attacked the community and the Tuatha Dé Danann were forced underground. Living in mounds, known in Ireland as Sidhe, the Tuatha Dé Danann used their magic to become the Aos Sí: fairies or, as many Irish people call them, the "wee folk" or "little folk".

Elements of the story of the Aos Sí can be found all over Ireland, with natural and man-made sites of significance attributed to the fairy folk in some way, remaining a consistent feature of the landscape. Sidhe mounds, where the fairies are said to live since their defeat at the hands of the Milesians, were, and still are, viewed as the homes of fairies, and as a result are sometimes considered to be entrances to the Otherworld – where the ancient beings of Irish mythology, such as the Celtic deities, live alongside the Aos Sí. As a result, Sidhe mounds ▶

are sacred places in Ireland that people aim to protect. Away from their folkloric explanations, many of the Sidhe mounds that populate Ireland's scenery actually served as burial mounds or tombs for the ancient civilisations of Ireland. The fact that many tombs have been discovered within Sidhe mounds has only added to their mystery over the years.

Other landmarks of significance that are tied to fairy lore include the plethora of stone circles across Ireland. Structures that date from a wide period of Ireland's bygone past, from the Iron Age through to the medieval era, have remained largely untouched due to the belief of the Irish that these areas serve as 'fairy forts' or 'fairy rings'. Originally built as defences around the properties and farmsteads of historic Ireland's small kingdoms, to protect people and livestock from raiders, the ruins of these fortifications have, over the years, become inextricably intertwined with fairy folklore. Like the Sidhe mounds, they are considered to be precious spaces, and potential portals to the Otherworld. Of course, it is understandable that later civilisations may have attributed these strange structures to the fairy folk as a way of attaching meaning to their existence.

> "Bad luck was said to befall anyone who tampered with the integrity of a fairy fort"

For fear of incurring the wrath of the strange, mythical, and sometimes vengeful creatures who are believed to inhabit the circular fortifications, people gave them a wide berth and worked to preserve the areas in which they were found.

The fear of the wrath of the fairy folk was all too real throughout Ireland's history, especially when it came to any damage to so-called fairy forts. Bad luck was said to befall anyone who tampered with the integrity of a fairy fort and to some extent those superstitions live on. An article in *The Irish Times* pointed out that as recently as the 20th century, the destruction of fairy forts was thought to be responsible for unfortunate events taking place: "It is widely believed that the demise of Sean Quinn's cement and insurance empire in Cavan and of John DeLorean's sports car industry in Belfast were directly attributable to the conscious destruction of 'sacred' ringforts." Even more recently, in 2017, an Irish politician reportedly attributed damage done to a road to fairy forts being disturbed: "There are numerous fairy forts in that area… I know that they are linked. Anyone that tampered with them back over the years paid a high price and had bad luck."

The Irish Mascot

There are many different types of Aos Sí in Irish folklore, many of whom are tied to the story of the Tuatha Dé Danann. Arguably the most iconic of all these fairies is the leprechaun. Plastered across fridge magnets and postcards for all tourists to take home from their trips to Ireland, and a global mascot for St. Patrick's Day, the leprechaun has become symbolic of Irish mythology and identity. But where did this mischievous creature come from?

The origins of the leprechaun are complicated to say the least. Unlike other folkloric creatures that have a singular traceable origin, leprechauns are a little harder to pinpoint. It is believed by some that they are a diminutive form of fairy, and evolved after the Tuatha Dé Danann went underground. Rather than living with others of their kind, leprechauns lived solitary existences and took the form of little bearded men. Why leprechauns were smaller than other fairies is not clear, but their size is an important factor in establishing where the word "leprechaun" came from. Some scholars have speculated that the term derives from the old Irish words "luchorpán" or "lupracán". When examining the origins of these words, "Lú" translates from Greek to mean "small", while "corp" comes from the Latin word "corpus", translating as "body". Thus, the leprechaun is quite literally a person of "small body".

The leprechaun character may also have come from the story of the ancient Celtic deity Lugh, a hero of Irish mythology and god of the Sun and the light. Lugh, along with other Celtic gods and goddesses, inhabited the Otherworld with the Tuatha Dé Danann as Christianity swept across Ireland and forced the traditional deities out. As a result of living in Sidhe mounds, Lugh began to stoop to fit in his new surroundings. He thus became known as Lugh-chromain, meaning Stooping Lugh. It

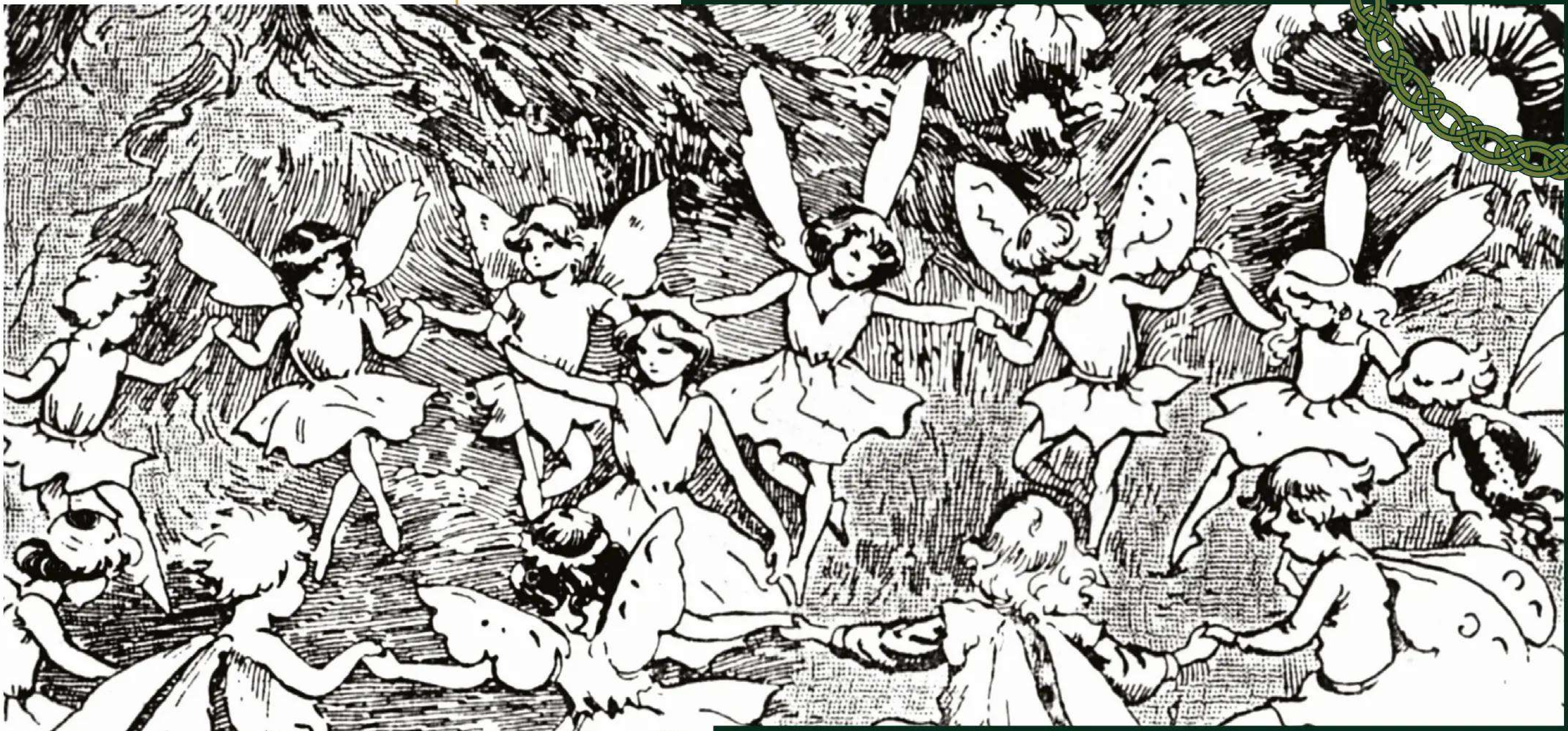
Fionn Mac Cumhaill and the Giant's Causeway

How was Ireland's most famous landmark created?

In County Antrim, on the north coast of Northern Ireland, a strange configuration of columns exist out into the sea towards Scotland. Formed around 60 million years ago, the basalt columns that make up this famous landmark were the result of a historic volcanic eruption as well as the separation of the landmass of Ireland from North America. Over time, a story was passed down by the inhabitants of Ireland to explain this odd, and supernatural-looking, natural phenomenon.

First written down in the medieval period, the story goes that the giant called Fionn Mac Cumhaill (or Finn MacCool) built a causeway between Ireland and Scotland in order to fight his Scottish rival Benandonner. Though versions of the tale differ as to what exactly happened between the feuding giants, it is believed that Benandonner crossed the specially built causeway and either destroyed it on his way back to Scotland in a fit of rage, or as a preventative measure to stop the fearsome Mac Cumhaill from coming after him. Another version of the story tells of how Mac Cumhaill actually built the causeway in order to reach a Scottish lover, but that by the time he had built and walked the causeway he was so exhausted that he died.

The story of the basalt structure has captured the imagination of people throughout the centuries, with the landmark retaining the name of the Giant's Causeway and continuing to attract visitors from around the world.



is a possibility that the term "leprechaun" came from "Lugh-chromain" and that over time the image of the stooped god evolved into the concept of the mischievous petite men that populate Ireland's history. One of Lugh's domains as a deity was craftsmanship, and as leprechauns are sometimes attributed with being shoemakers, it would make sense that they may have emanated from lore surrounding Lugh. Lugh has also been depicted in Irish mythology as a trickster – again, a well-known attribute of the leprechaun.

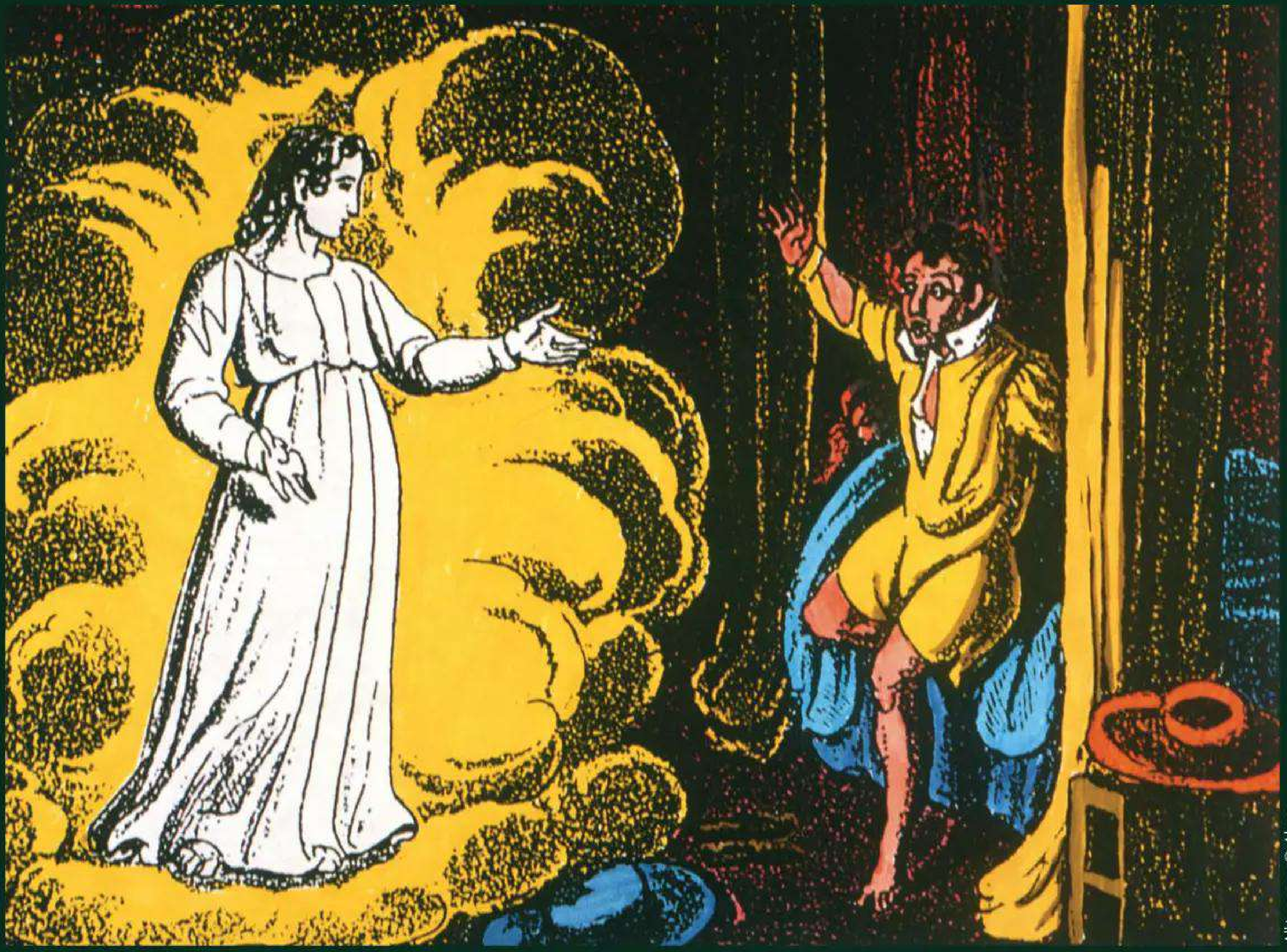
A third explanation of the leprechaun is that they are the water sprites that feature in *Echtra Fergusa maic Léti* (The Adventure of Fergus Son of Léte). In this tale, which dates from the 8th century, mischievous sprites attempt to kidnap the sleeping hero Fergus and drag him into the water. However, Fergus wakes up and captures the sprites who promise him three wishes if he lets them go. This concept of a fairy creature being able to grant wishes has also become associated with leprechauns, and so it is possible this tale contributed to the evolution of the leprechaun myth.

What is likely is that over time and across the country, all these stories of ▶

ABOVE Fairies, or Aos Sí, form a central part of Ireland's folklore and history

RIGHT Athgreany in County Wicklow is the site of an ancient stone circle and a hawthorn tree that has long been associated with fairies

BELOW-RIGHT In some tales, the banshee appeared as a beautiful young woman despite being the harbinger of death



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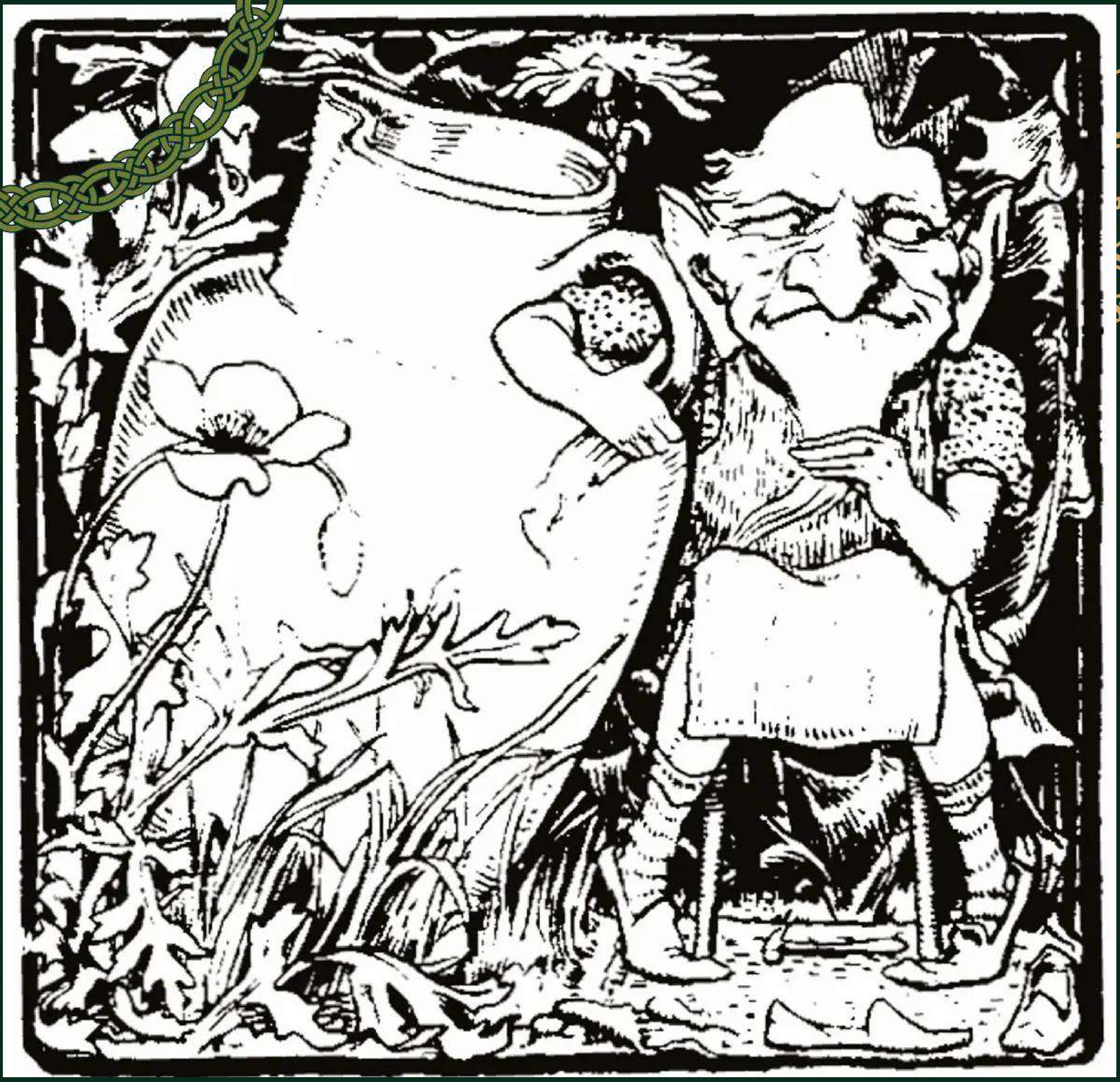
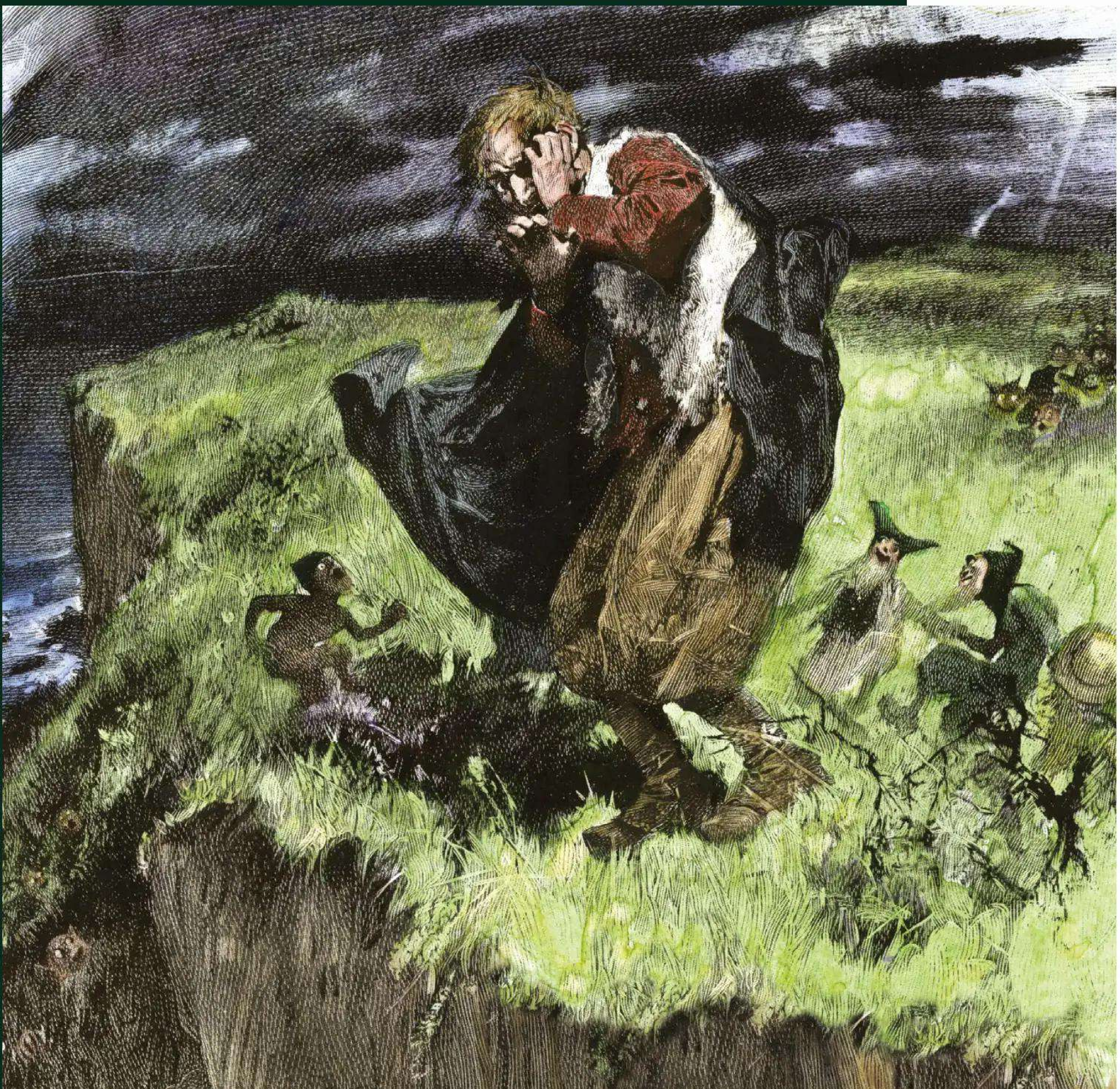




LEFT A depiction of a leprechaun, complete with a pair of shoes he may have made

BELOW An illustration of leprechauns leading a drunk man astray

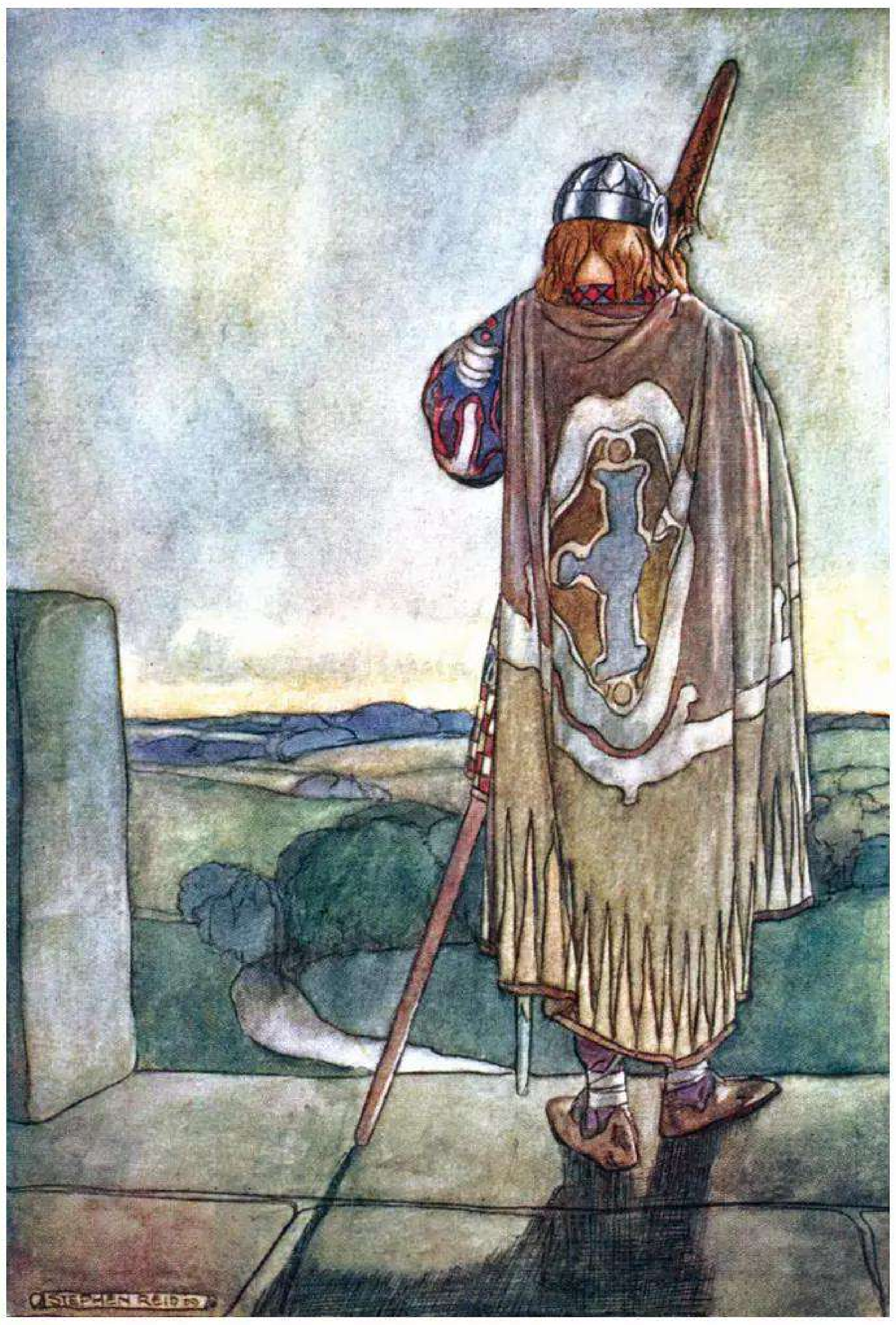
BELOW-RIGHT It may have been the giant Fionn Mac Cumhaill that killed the vampire Abhartach

troublesome male fairy-esque creatures amalgamated to create the leprechaun that is such a symbol of Ireland today. However, the version of the character that is most familiar today has some particular characteristics. One of the most iconic aspects is that they are keepers of wealth, and can sometimes be found at the end of a rainbow with a pot of gold. Another firm attribute of the leprechaun is that they are always male. Fairies, in general, appear to be able to be of any sex, whereas there is no record of a female leprechaun ever being mentioned in any tale.

The howl of the Banshee

The most feared of Ireland's fairy creatures is undoubtedly the banshee. Just as a leprechaun is always male, a banshee is always female with the term "banshee" deriving from the old Irish "bean sidhe" which literally translates as "fairy woman". For the Irish, coming across a banshee is something that should be avoided at all costs, as the banshee's scream is said to be the herald of death itself. In some circumstances, hearing a banshee signalled an impending death, whereas sometimes the wail of the banshee told of a death that had already occurred, but the person hearing the cry may not have been given the news yet.

Of course, like any folkloric tale, there are differentiations in the accounts of those who have heard the cry of the banshee. While the banshee's function



The Ossory Werewolves

Who were Ireland's wolf warriors?

Though tales of werewolves and wolf-human hybrids are rife across European folklore, Ireland's tale of the werewolves of Ossory ties werewolf lore to ancient Irish kingship. The ancient kingdom of Ossory had a long history, and the royal lineage of the kingdom was believed to descend from Laignech Faelad, the king of Ossory's brother who had the ability to transform into a wolf. As a result of Faelad's supernatural powers, the descendants of the Ossory kings inherited the wolf genes and formed a mercenary tribe of vicious werewolves for hire. Accounts of these fearsome wolf warriors can be found in medieval Irish sources, but are also described in English and Norse accounts from around the same time.

Wolves existed in Ireland throughout the ancient and medieval periods, and were such an issue that the Irish bred a dog specifically to hunt them: the Irish Wolfhound. It is most likely that the legend of the Ossory werewolves derived from a group of ancient Irish warriors who became associated with wolves due to their tendency to wear wolf skins and have untamed hair. When these fearsome warriors went on raids, it was referred to as "going wolfing". Somewhere down the line, these wolf-like warriors were attributed with the power to actually turn into the creatures by those who passed the stories of their existence down through the generations.

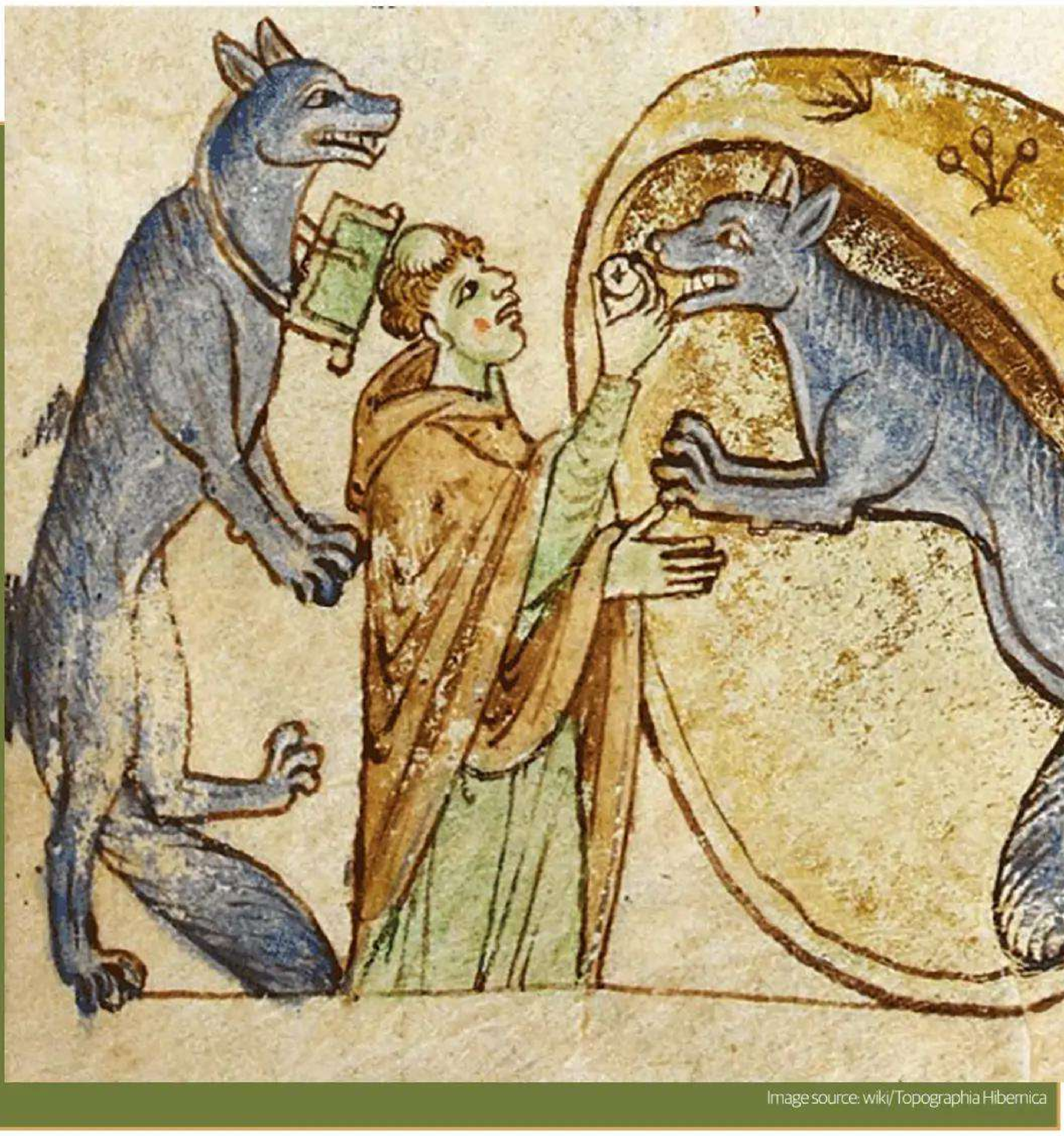
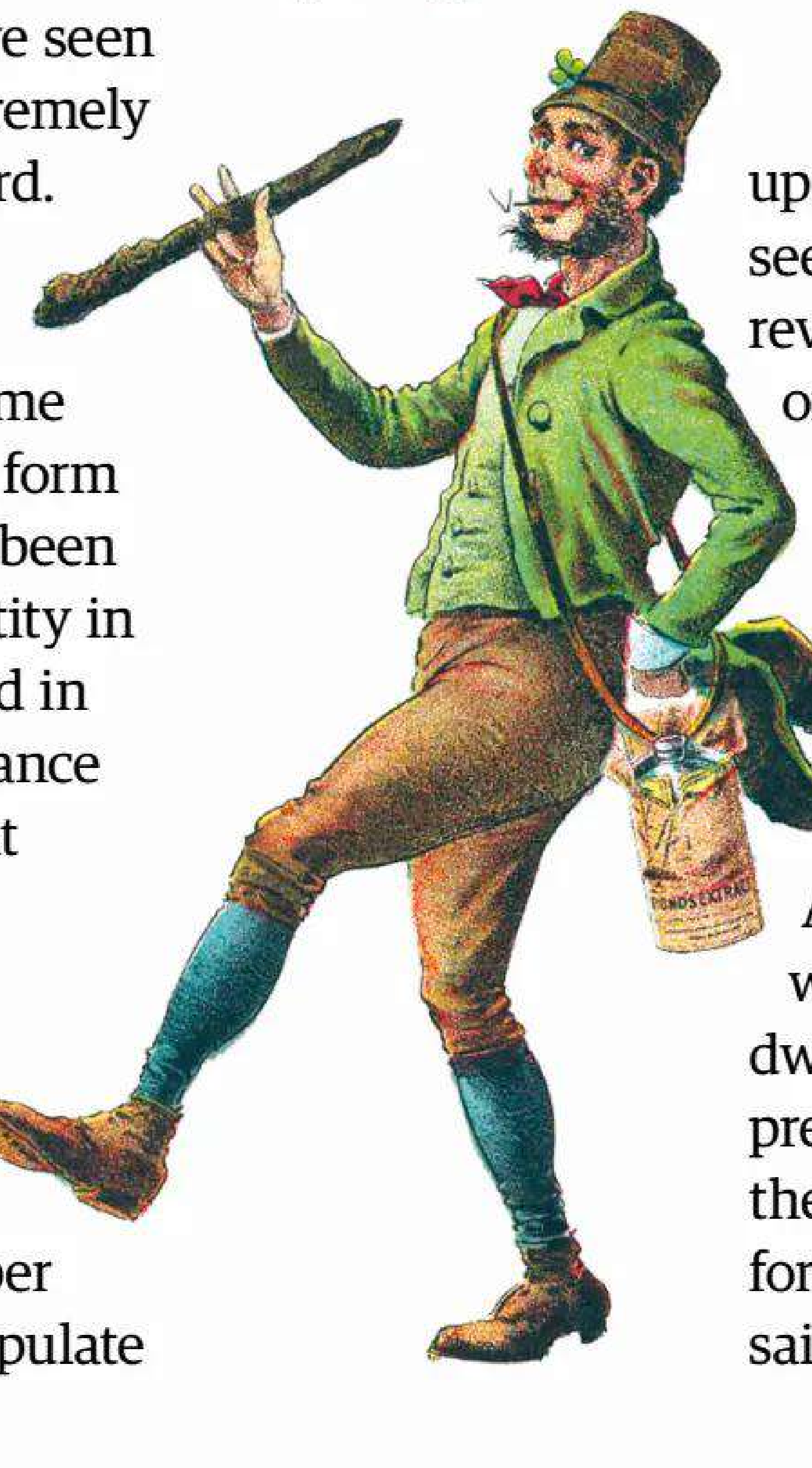


Image source: wiki/Topographia Hibernica

remains largely the same across each version, the wailing sound so synonymous with the banshee appears in different forms. For example, in County Kerry in the southwest of Ireland, when people refer to the cry of the banshee they talk of haunting but pleasant songs and melodies that can be heard in the night. However, in Leinster in the east of the isle, the banshee's piercing scream can shatter glass with its pitch. The idea that a wailing sound, in whichever form it comes, is associated with death can easily be linked to the Irish tradition of keening – a historic lament that formed a central part of the mourning process for many grieving people throughout Ireland's history.

The appearance of the banshee also takes different forms. They have been described by those who claim to have seen them as everything from tiny to extremely tall; young or old; beautiful or haggard. There have even been accounts of the banshee as a headless woman with a bowl of blood in her arms. Some banshees do not even take a human form as most fairy creatures do, and have been described more as a supernatural entity in appearance. One fairly common trend in descriptions of the banshee's appearance though, are the piercing red eyes that frighten those who look into them.



BELOW The idea that leprechauns wear green is a much later addition to their mythology

The Irish Vampire Abhartach

Aside from creatures that can be classified as fairies, there are a number of other mythological beings that populate Ireland's long history. The concept of the vampire is a worldwide phenomenon, but Ireland has its very own vampiric tale to keep you up at night. First appearing in a book called *The Origin and History of Irish Names of Places* by Patrick Weston Joyce in 1870, Abhartach is a much more modern addition to the creatures of Irish folklore.

The story goes that Abhartach, a mystic tyrannical dwarf, was the leader of a town called Slaghtaverty. The people of the town were terrified of him and after years of torment and abuse, they implored another local chieftain from a nearby town to help them be rid of Abhartach. Answering their call for help, the chieftain killed Abhartach and buried him standing up. However, the very next day Abhartach seemingly came back to life and wanted revenge. And so the chieftain returned and once again defeated him, burying him for a second time, again in a standing position. But the walking dead don't tend to give up easily and by the next day Abhartach was back terrorising the community. The chieftain, realising he needed help to vanquish Abhartach for good, consulted a druid who informed him that the zombie dwarf needed to be buried upside down to prevent him from rising from the dead. So, the town's hero returned to kill Abhartach for a final time and, as the druid had said, ensured he was placed in his grave standing on his head. For extra security, a large stone was placed on top of the grave, and Abhartach was finally trapped.

> "The banshee's piercing scream can shatter glass with its pitch"

Again, there are discrepancies between different versions of the Abhartach story. Some accounts attribute the killing of the dwarf to Fionn Mac Cumhaill – the architect of the Giant's Causeway – while in others the legendary hero Cathain saves the townspeople. Another distinct difference in versions is that in some retellings, Abhartach returns from the dead as a terrifying blood-drinking predator. It is likely that on some level, the widespread myth of Abhartach served as some source of inspiration for Ireland's Gothic authors Bram Stoker and Sheridan le Fanu, the creators of the fictional vampires Dracula and Carmilla respectively. Without the story of Abhartach, who knows how those classic horror stories might have looked? The supposed grave of Abhartach, where the vampire creature is still said to be trapped upside down, can be located next to a hawthorn tree in County Londonderry. The presence of a physical grave is representative of how visible folklore like this was, and still is, to the Irish. As with the fairy rings, forts and mounds, the physical landscape of Ireland acts as a constant reminder of the legendary creatures who continue to leave their mark on Ireland and the Irish people.

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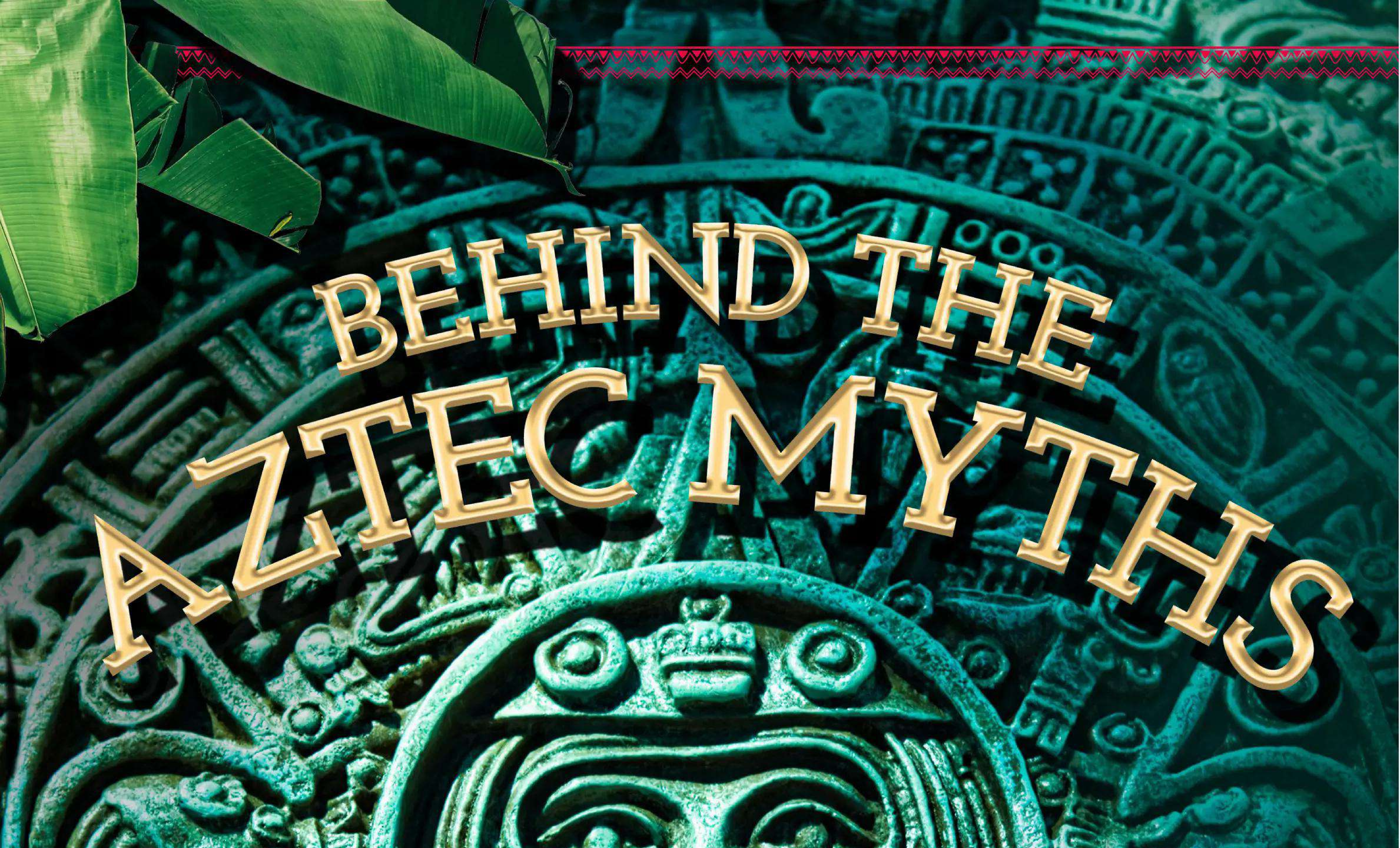

BEHIND THE AZTEC MYTHS

Camilla Townsend helps us to cut through the colonial legacy of this misunderstood people

Interview by Jonathan Gordon

© Courtesy of Thames & Hudson

EXPERT BIO

PROFESSOR CAMILLA TOWNSEND

Professor Camilla Townsend specialises in early Native American and Latin American history with a number of books to her name on these subjects. They include *Fifth Sun: A new history of the Aztecs* (Oxford University Press, 2019) and *Annals of Native America: How the Nahuas of Colonial Mexico kept their history alive* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

Despite centuries of research and interest in the Aztec people, they remain one of the more misunderstood and mysterious cultures to many of us. Thanks to a combination of Spanish records from the time painting them in a very particular light, and an understandable preference for some of the gorier details of public life in Central America at the time, what it was really like living in a city like Teotihuacan can be hard to imagine. Experts like Camilla Townsend have thankfully been working hard to demystify the Aztecs and highlight sources that give voice to the real people behind the legends. Her new book, *The Aztec Myths*, breaks down their real and evolving religious beliefs and we were delighted to catch up with her to learn more.

How challenging is it to unpick the true beliefs of the Aztecs from those the Spanish projected onto them?
It is very difficult. In fact, it is so difficult that we have imbibed a great deal of misinformation. Traditionally, scholars used the writings of Spaniards – or of Indigenous people working under the supervision of Spanish friars – to study Aztec religious beliefs. Quite frankly, this didn't work terribly well, but we kept up the practice because it had become customary. And many scholars could not read other kinds of existing primary sources that might have been more helpful.

What primary sources are still available to us to interpret their myths?
We have hundreds of pages of writing in the Aztecs' own language of Nahuatl. Before the arrival of Europeans, the Aztecs had a pictographic writing system that consisted of suggestive images intended to elicit from trained reciters the telling of certain tales. (For instance, a picture of a burning temple could serve as a reminder to give an account of a particular war.) After the conquest, Spanish friars taught hundreds of adolescent students the Roman alphabet (what we think of as our alphabet) so that they could read the Bible and help proselytise their people. The young scholars were very helpful to the friars in that regard. But some of them took the new, phonetic writing system home and employed it for a different purpose: they used it to transcribe the words of their elders.

"Tell me the history of the Tepanec Wars," they might say to an old uncle, who would tell it to them, and they would use the letters to sound out the Nahuatl words and record them on paper. Now, most of what they wrote down was historical and political, since these young people who knew the Roman alphabet were baptised Christians, and they wished to avoid writing too much about the old, pagan gods. Yet most of the historical sources nevertheless begin with a few paragraphs or pages of more spiritual material. I decided to try to glean what I could about Aztec religious beliefs from those sources, written in Nahuatl for the authors' own families. The Spaniards couldn't interfere with the project, because they didn't even know it was happening!

What was the origin myth for the Aztecs and how, if at all, was that reflected in their practices?
The Aztecs believed that the universe had collapsed four times in the past, and that they themselves were living under the Fifth Sun. After the implosion of the fourth world, the gods and other beings, both human and animal, all lived in darkness, in desperate need of a sun. So the gods gathered everybody together at what is today the stupendous archaeological site of Teotihuacan and they asked for someone to volunteer to immolate himself and become the solar orb. One great hero did volunteer. But the gods were not satisfied with just one. They looked around, but no one else stepped forward. Then they singled out Nanahuatzin (whose name means "Little Pimply One") and asked him to volunteer. He was an ordinary guy and did not want to do it, but he said that since the gods had always been good to him, he would try to find the courage to do what needed to be done to help those who would come after him. The great hero ran to leap into a bonfire created by the gods, but he pulled up short. He tried again and again, but he ▶

ABOVE The head of Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent, from the Temple of Quetzalcoatl in Teotihuacan, Mexico

RIGHT An eagle warrior from the Templo Mayor Museum in Mexico City

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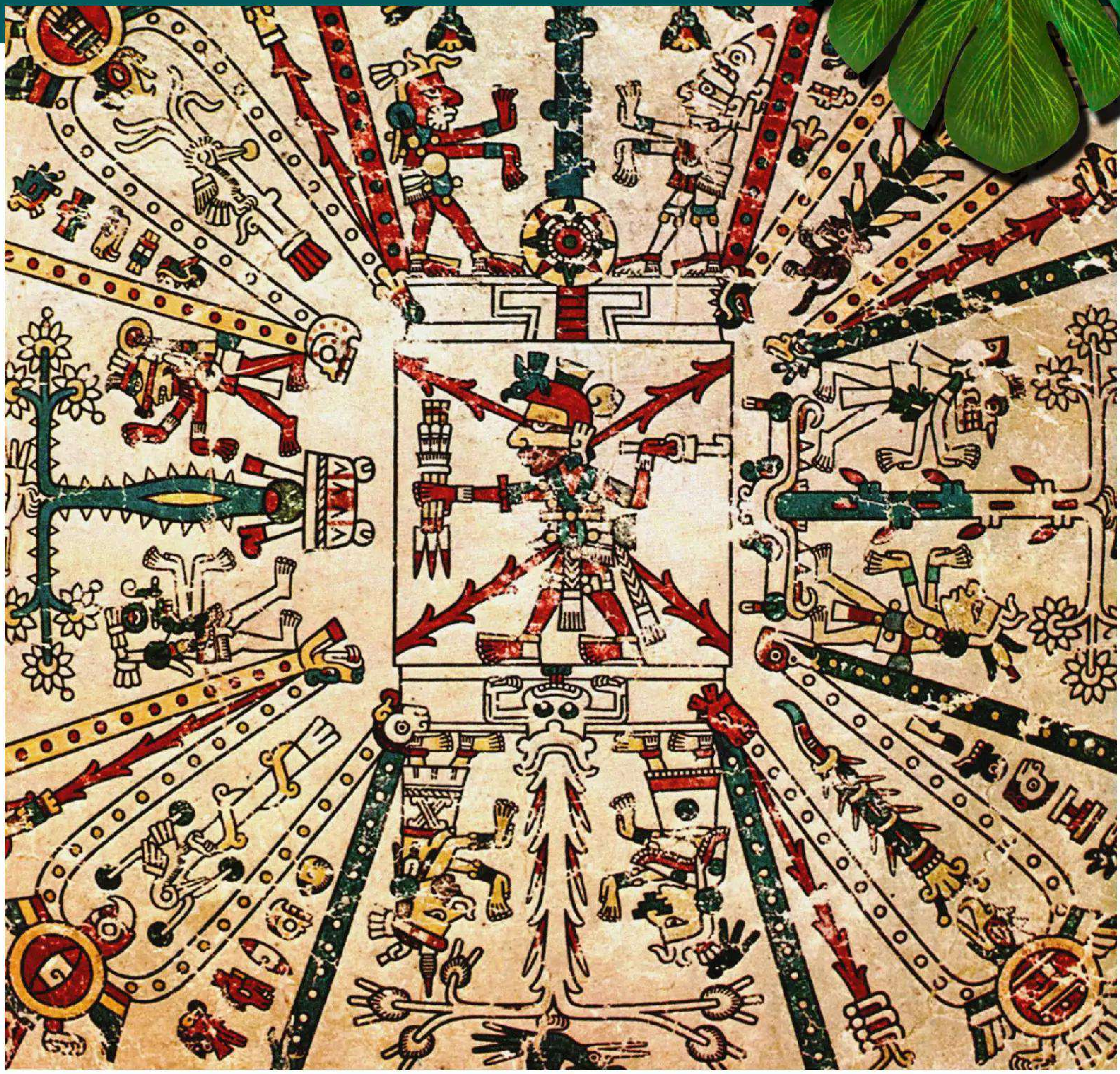
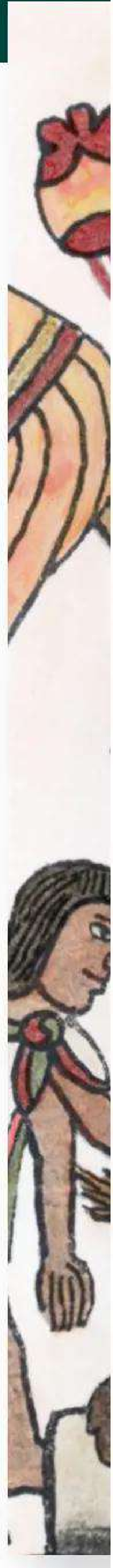


TOP The god Xiuhtecuhtli from the *Codex Fejérváry-Mayer*



"THE AZTECS WERE SKYWATCHERS AND KNEW ABOUT THE 365-DAY YEAR, JUST AS WE DO"

could not do it. Then Nanahuatzin closed his eyes tightly and ran forward to do what had to be done. He did not stop. His body burned in a great conflagration and became the sun. The Aztecs loved Nanahuatzin and identified with him because they felt that they, too, had started out as ordinary guys who did not necessarily want to do great or dangerous deeds, but who had done so because they were called upon to be brave for the sake of their descendants. We must remember that not long before, they had come down from the north (from what is today the southwestern United States) as impoverished migrants, and then they had made something of themselves.

What role did the measuring and marking of time play in Aztec life?

An Aztec person was always conscious of two different wheels of time. On one hand, there was the solar year, which consisted of 18 months of 20 days each, for a total of 360 days, plus five "blank" days called the period of nemontemi, during which time people prayed for renewal. As you can tell, the Aztecs were skywatchers and knew about the 365-day year, just as we do (they hadn't worked out the equivalent of our leap year, but I imagine they would have done so eventually if they had been left alone). On another level, Aztec people were also always in the midst of a ceremonial or spiritual calendar, with the 20 days signs appearing in counts of 13, for a total of 260 days. (Many scholars believe that this originated as a count that is close to the human gestation cycle.)

At first glance, this system might seem impossibly complicated for an ordinary person to keep track of, but we ourselves do something similar: we always know what month and date it is in the solar calendar, and at the same time, we maintain a completely unrelated, eternally repeating series of seven day-signs named for Norse gods.

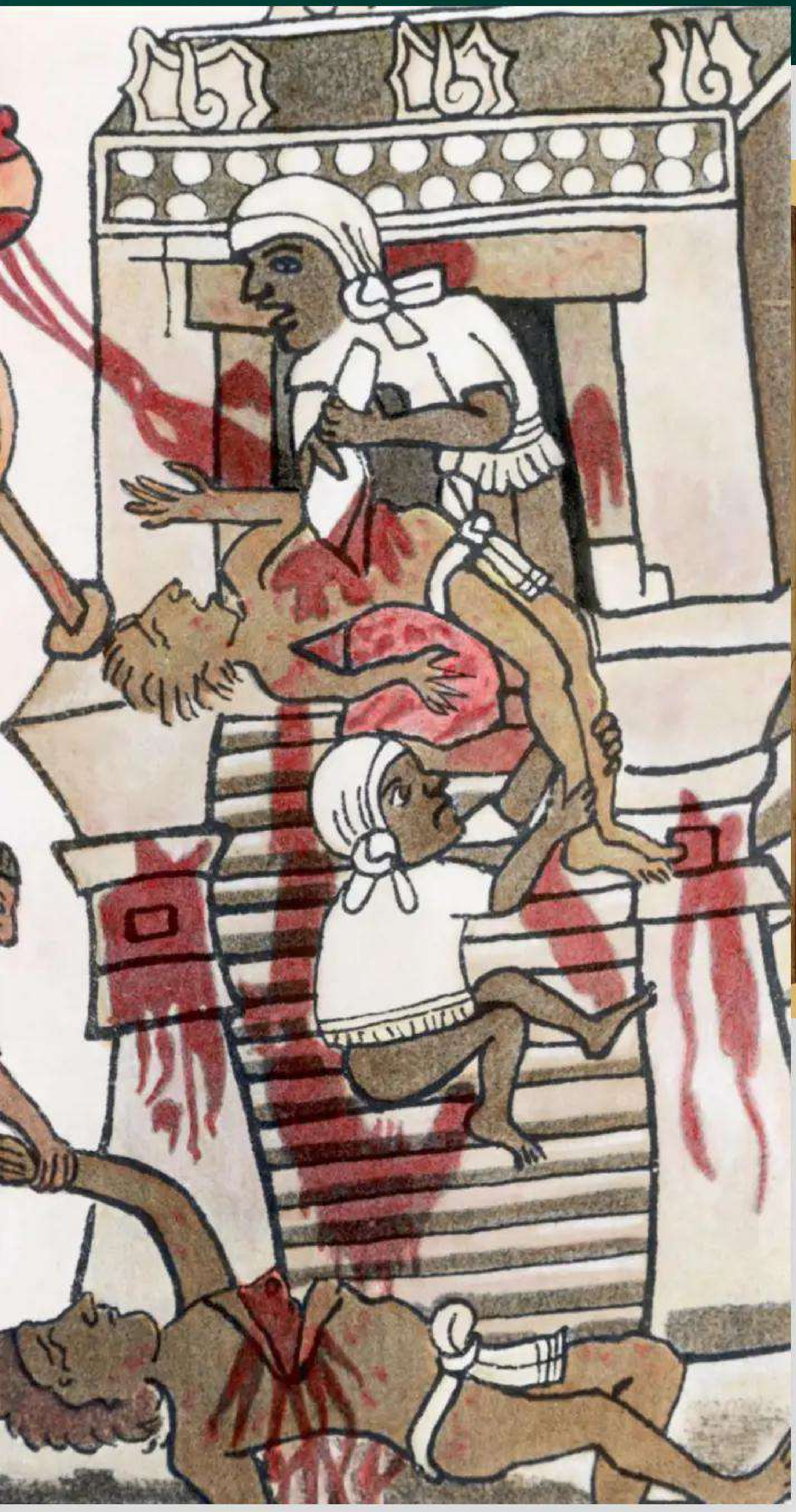
Who were some of the most important mythical figures?

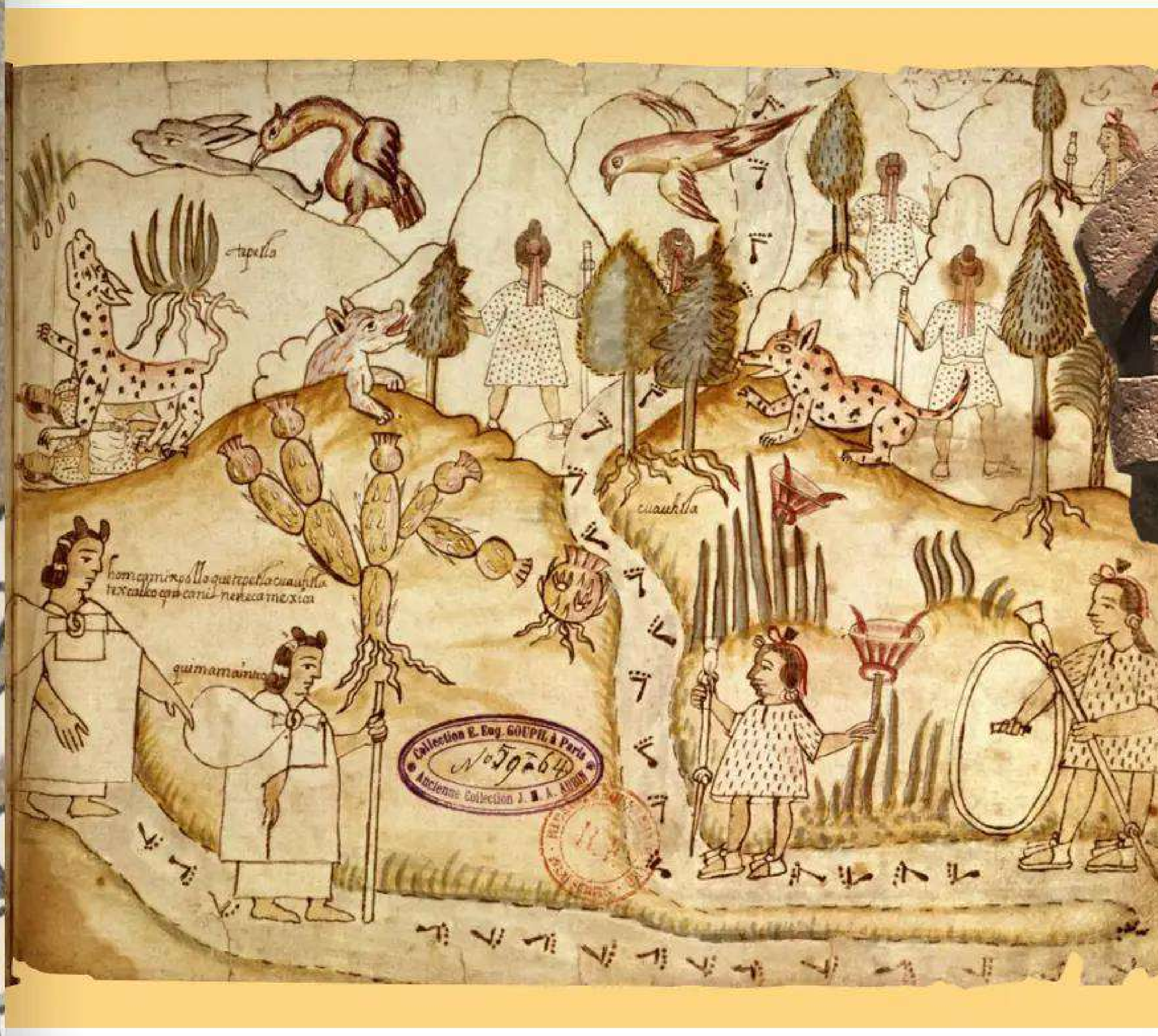
In the past, scholars have promulgated the idea of an Aztec pantheon, a bit like the Olympians of ancient Greece. But at this point, most of us have stopped believing that we can really give a list of 10 or 20 or even 50 separate and eternally defined beings. Instead, the gods seem to have been a bit like 'mosaics' with clusters of characteristics, which different believers could pick and choose from in different ways at different times.

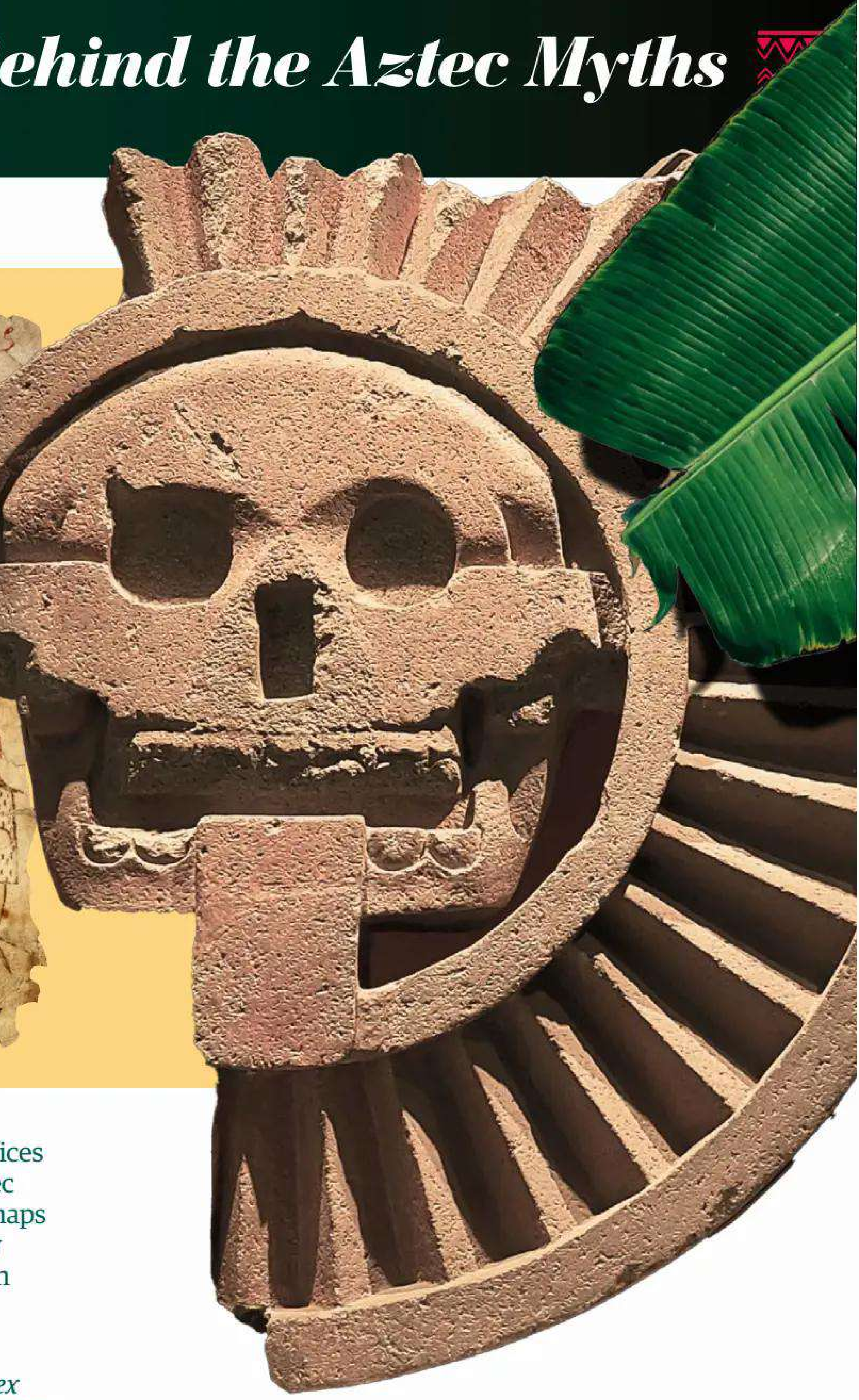
Still, there were certain divine figures that everyone in central Mexico would have recognised, even if they each had their own slightly different versions. There was Tezcatlipoca ("Smoking Mirror"), the frightening bringer of change through conflict or random acts of power. There was Quetzalcoatl ("Feathered Serpent"), who was a crosser of boundaries and, with his creative bent, the protector of priests and of artists. And there was Tlaloc, often styled "the god of rain" in Spanish sources, but whose name really meant, "Filled with Soil", and whose various divine aspects constituted all the elements of humans' earthly home, wet and dry, high and low.

What are some of the big misunderstandings concerning the Aztecs and human sacrifice?

It has become commonplace to assert that the Aztecs loved death and believed that if they did not sacrifice hundreds of people every month (or some say, every day), the sun would not continue to rise. As with many stereotypes, there is a kernel of truth buried in the myth. Archaeologists teach us that ancient humans in many places practised some form of human sacrifice. Native Americans were no different. Many of them believed that the greatest gift one could offer to the gods was the gift of human life, and some of them translated this into an occasional sacrifice of a prisoner of war. Such prisoners were not demeaned. It was a great honour to die for the gods. In the second half of the 1400s, as the Aztecs tried to solidify their power, they took this notion and weaponised it. Their high priests, who were tightly connected to the ruling family, began to say that more sacrifices needed to be made, eventually killing far more than ever before. If they wanted to bring a new region into their empire, they would kidnap people from







LEFT While sacrifices were a part of Aztec life, they were perhaps not as bloodthirsty as history has often recorded

ABOVE A small portion of the *Codex Azcatitlan* that tells the history of the Mexica people

ABOVE RIGHT A stone disc depicting Mictlantecuhtli, the Aztec god of death, ruler of the underworld, Mictlān

there and bring them to see a terrifying ceremony, then send them home, knowing they would advise joining voluntarily, rather than fighting and risking brutal conquest.

Do we have evidence of the gods of the Aztecs evolving or morphing over time?

You are pointing to a central issue: we do indeed have evidence that the Aztecs' ideas about what their gods demanded changed over time. The most ancient stories and early archaeological remains both tell us that when they first arrived in the Central Valley of Mexico, they were poor and powerless. They were in no position to offer their gods dozens of sacrifice victims! Instead, they begged various city states just to be allowed to live on their land, or to build a tiny pyramid temple. Only as their power grew – and when they began to fear backsliding into vulnerability – do we find evidence (in the stories, or in archaeological remains) of their developing ceremonies that required the deaths of many people.

How different could Aztec myths be from storyteller to storyteller?

I find that each version of a particular story is a bit different than all other versions. On the other hand, these differences are relatively small: the main themes of a particular tale are quite consistent. For instance, their tutelary god, Huitzilopochtli (Left-Footed Like a Hummingbird) most often quarrels violently with his sister in defence of his beloved mother, but in one version, he becomes angry with his mother in defence of his people. I suppose the 'moral of the story' is that we shouldn't draw grand conclusions from one particular item in one particular text, just in case it's an outlier; on the other hand, we shouldn't assume that there are no patterns, because if we read enough in the Nahuatl literature, we see that there are.

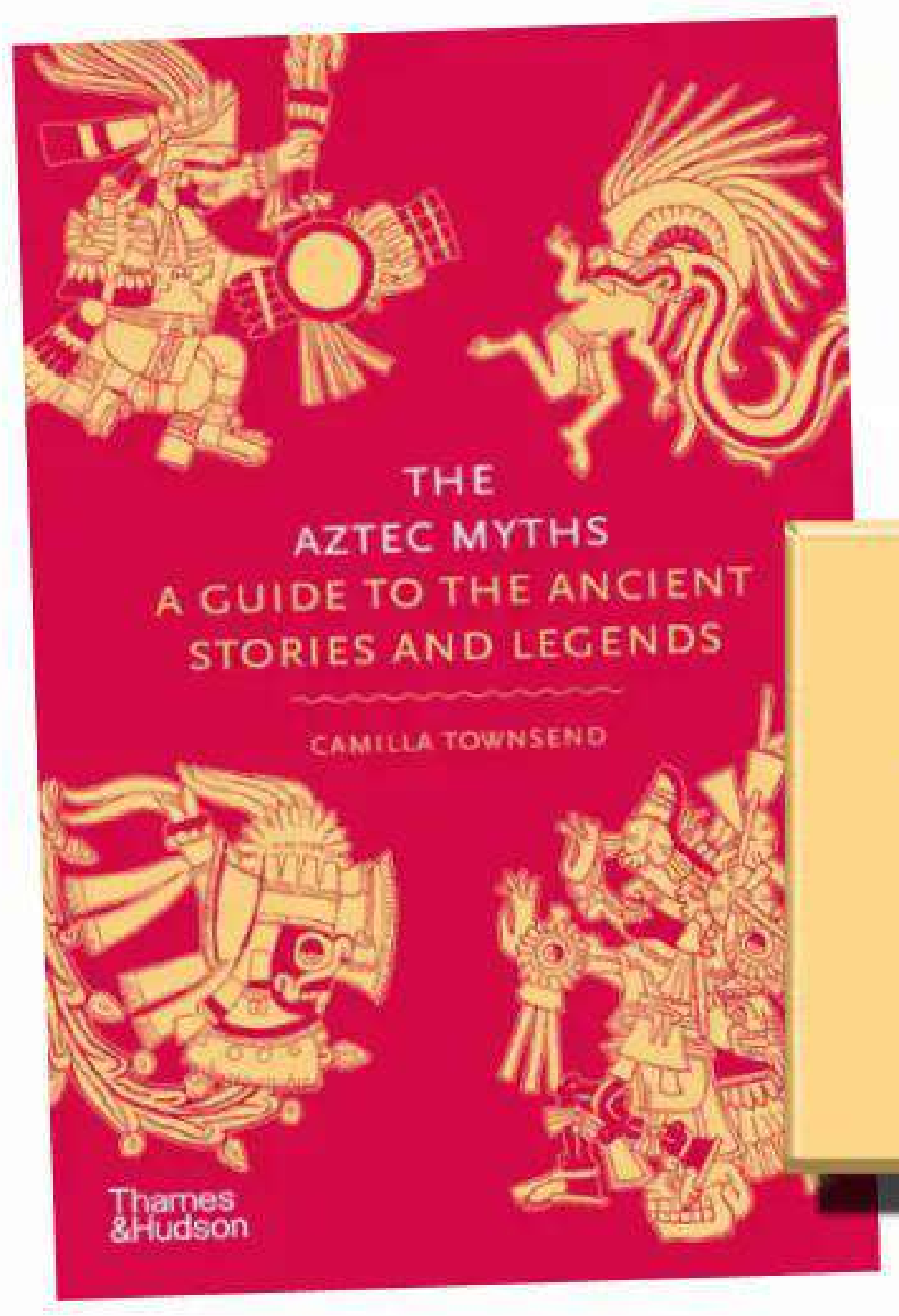
What were some of the central tenants of life for Aztecs that they drew from their mythologies and stories?

Some people may find this surprising, but far from loving death, the Aztecs hated and bemoaned it. They dreaded the necessity of killing or being killed in times of war. People who gave their lives for their people – men who died in battle, or as a sacrificed prisoner of war, or women who died in childbirth – could expect to live on at the side of the gods for a few more years, but for most people, death was the end, "our place of disappearing together," as they said. That meant that this world, this life, was what we might call heaven and should be loved and enjoyed and celebrated. Their stories taught them that. And at the same time, they taught them about the inevitability of conflict, and the ways that people should try to navigate it. They also insisted on the power of the divine, and that life is full of surprises.

Could you give an example of an Aztec story that you particularly like?

A clever one is an apocryphal story about the power of nature. The king of the Aztecs told Tzotzomatzin, the vassal king of a nearby settlement, that he wished to divert the waters of a certain river and bring them to the capital city of Tenochtitlan. Now, Tzotzomatzin did not wish to do this, for the river water irrigated his own people's fields. But he also did not wish to refuse the high king of the Aztecs. So he said that unfortunately, they could not obey, because the water had been bewitched by one of his ancestors and would flood if the river was diverted. The Aztec king consulted with a close advisor of his, another vassal king of a different nearby settlement, who snorted derisively and said that it was obvious that Tzotzomatzin was making up the story. At that, the king put Tzotzomatzin to death and had the river diverted.

Not long after, the river flooded, killing some people and sending many more out onto the roads, homeless. Now the Aztec king went into a rage and ordered the killing of the vassal king who had given him such bad advice. After a tale of human machinations and mutual second-guessing, the storyteller gives the river the last word. "So it was that two kings were killed because of the River Acuecuexatl!" ○



THE AZTEC MYTHS:
A GUIDE TO THE ANCIENT STORIES AND LEGENDS
BY CAMILLA TOWNSEND IS OUT NOW FROM THAMES & HUDSON

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The First Fairy Tales

Discover the origins of your favourite magical folklore

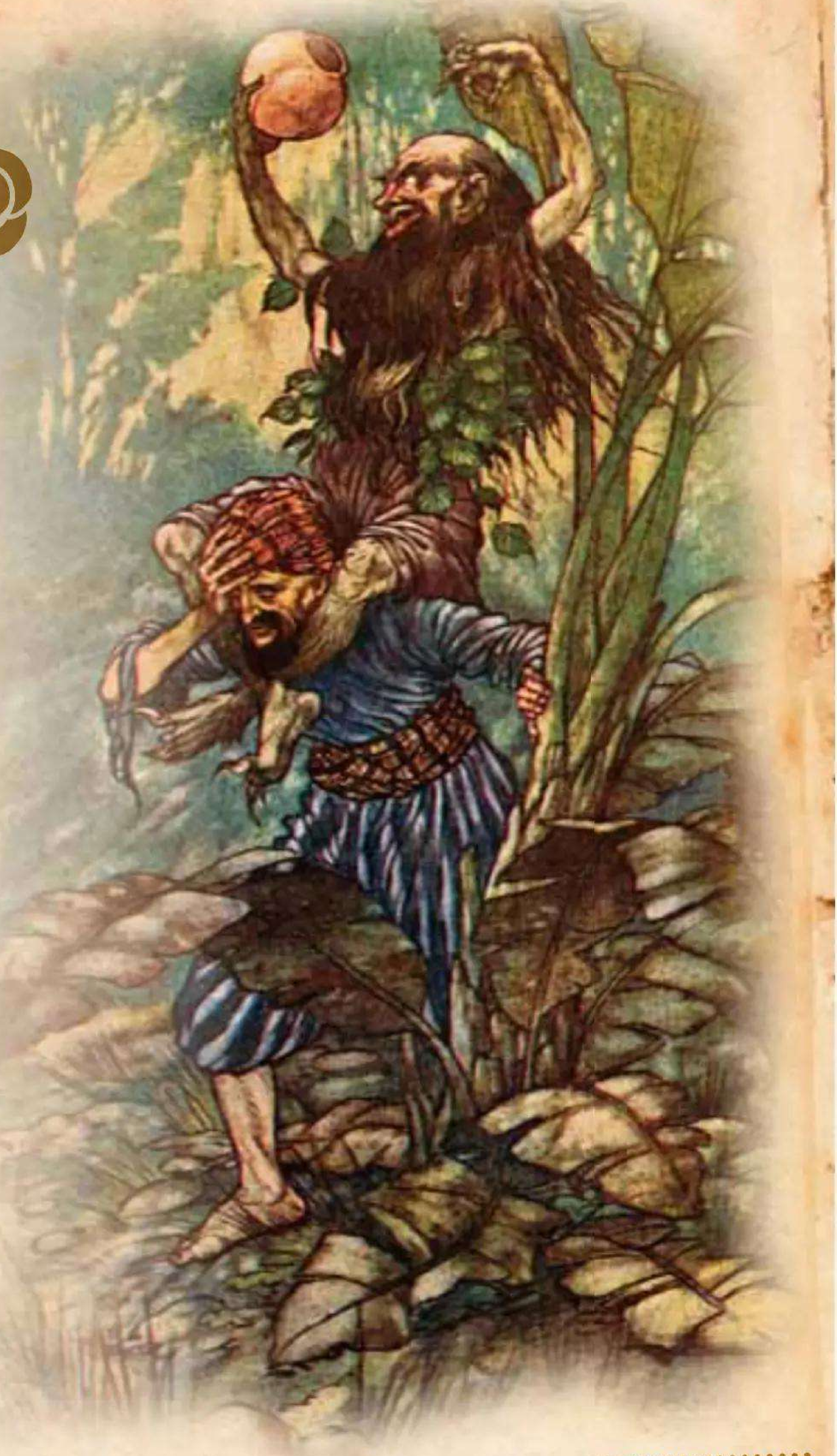
Written by Emily Staniforth

C*inderella*; ***Snow White***; ***Beauty And The Beast***. Before Disney got their hands on these stories and turned them into animated film classics to be enjoyed by children around the world, they were some of the first stories to be written down and ascribed to the fairy tale genre of storytelling. Even before they were written down however, stories of mystical beasts, princesses locked in towers and wicked stepmothers were circulating in different parts of the world, and told by a variety of narrators in an oral tradition. Passed down through the generations, the stories were subject to embellishment and change as each culture, society and individual shaped and tailored the tales to their own preferences and circumstances. By the time these stories began to be written down, those that committed them to paper were merely collectors, rather than creators, of the tales and their extensive heritage.

With the term 'fairy tale' a 17th century invention, it is possible to trace the development of the fairy tale genre through the core elements that are fundamental to a story of this kind. In identifying tales from history that feature components of magic, myth and morality, along with the entertaining inclusion of folkloric creatures (fairies, goblins, giants) and conversational animals, we can see how these fairy tales began, developed, and how they remain perpetually relevant and popular. ▶

One Thousand and One Nights

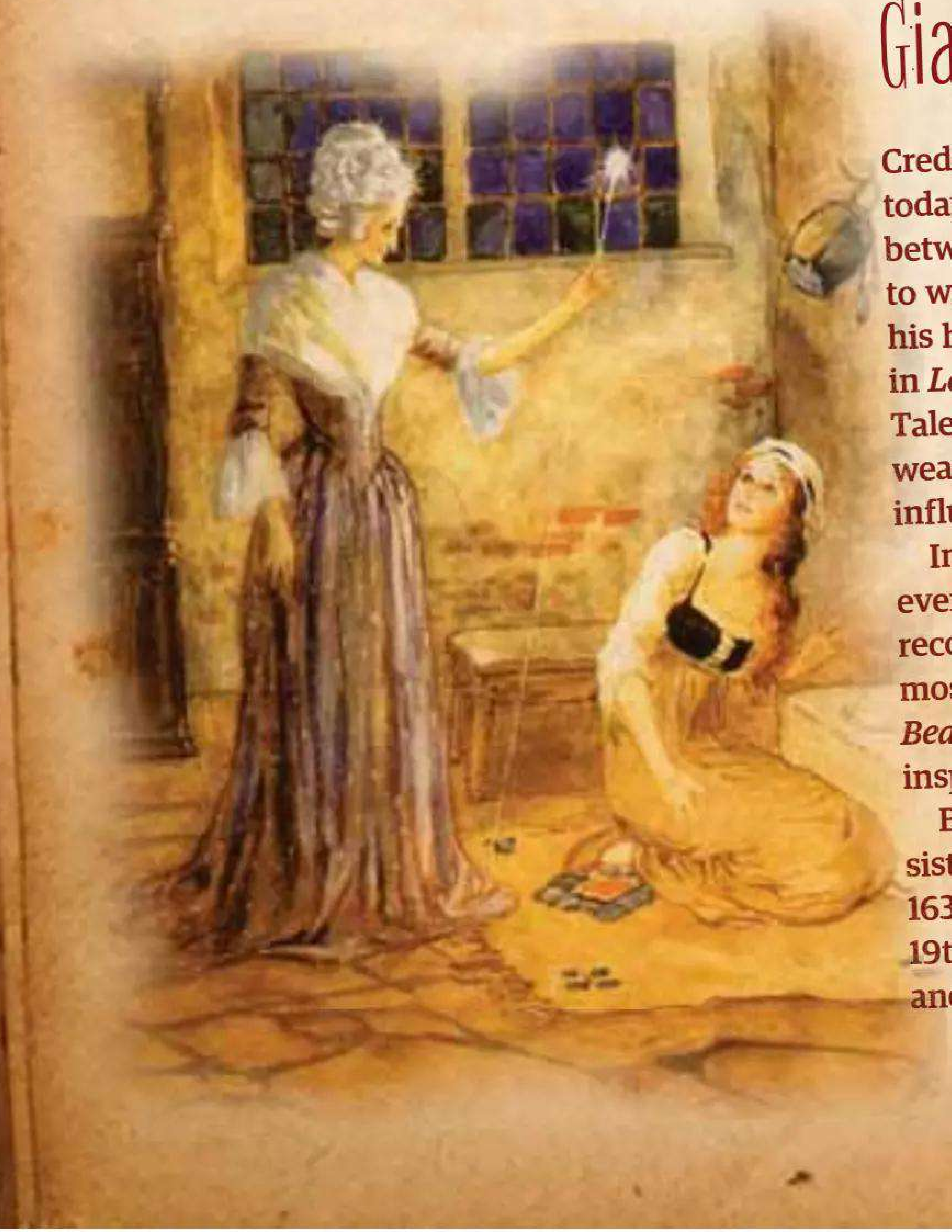
Middle East and South Asia, c.600 CE



Often referred to in English as 'Arabian Nights', *One Thousand And One Nights* are plausibly the most well-known non-Western and non-European fairy tales. It is believed that the stories from this collection first appeared in the oral form in around 600 CE, and were conveyed by storytellers from Iran, Saudi Arabia and India. How and by whom the collection was compiled remains unknown, though it is believed that the tales made their way to the city of Baghdad through these storytellers during the rule of the Abbasid Dynasty in the Islamic Golden Age, where they gained popularity. It is possible that the collection was first recorded as a whole in Syria during the 13th century under the title *Alf laylah wa laylah* (One Thousand And One Nights). However, many versions of the stories were recorded by different nations in which they incorporated their own specific details into the stories.

Despite the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate, the tales in *One Thousand And One Nights* survived and continued to circulate around the world. In the 18th century, French orientalist Antoine Galland translated the stories as a whole collection for the first time, and published the work as *Les Mille et Une Nuits* in the French language. Within this version of the Arabic tales, a selection of newer stories appeared, including the story of Aladdin and the magic lamp, and *Ali Baba And The Forty Thieves*. Until recently it was not known where these stories had originally come from, although research has now suggested that they were initially created by Hanna Diyab, a Syrian writer who met Galland in France.

In *One Thousand And One Nights*, King Shahryar commits to marrying and killing a new wife every day after his first wife was unfaithful to him. However, one young woman, Scheherazade, devises a plan to entertain the tyrannical king with a story every night. The king is so enthralled by Scheherazade's storytelling that he listens night after night until he eventually gives up on his evil plans. It is possible that this structure of tales within a tale influenced other writers like Basile and Geoffrey Chaucer. *One Thousand And One Nights* is also credited with introducing the concept of genies and ghouls, historically Arabic ideas, to a Western audience.



Giambattista Basile

Italy, 1634

Credited as being the first collector of fairy tales as we recognise them today, Giambattista Basile was a writer from Naples, Italy who lived between c.1566 and 1632. A soldier and courtier, Basile turned his hand to writing after becoming enthralled by the folktales and literature from his hometown. Collecting a selection of stories, Basile recorded them in *Lo cunto de li cunti overo lo trattenemiento de' peccerille* (The Tale Of Tales Or Entertainment For Little Ones), also known as *Il Pentamerone*, weaving them into an overarching narrative. Basile's collection was heavily influenced by Neapolitan tradition and dialect.

In *The Tale Of Tales*, the cursed Princess Zoza organises a storytelling event over five days with ten women telling 50 stories. Among the stories recounted by Basile's characters are the original versions of some of the most beloved fairy tales. The European origins of stories such as *Cinderella*, *Beauty And The Beast*, *Rapunzel* and *Snow White* all appear, and serve as inspiration for later authors who turned Basile's tales into classics.

Basile sadly did not live to see the publication of *The Tale Of Tales*. His sister Adriana had the collection published in two volumes in 1634 and 1635 under a pseudonym. The fairy tales received little attention until the 19th century when the Brothers Grimm highlighted the tales as the "best and richest that had been found by any nation".

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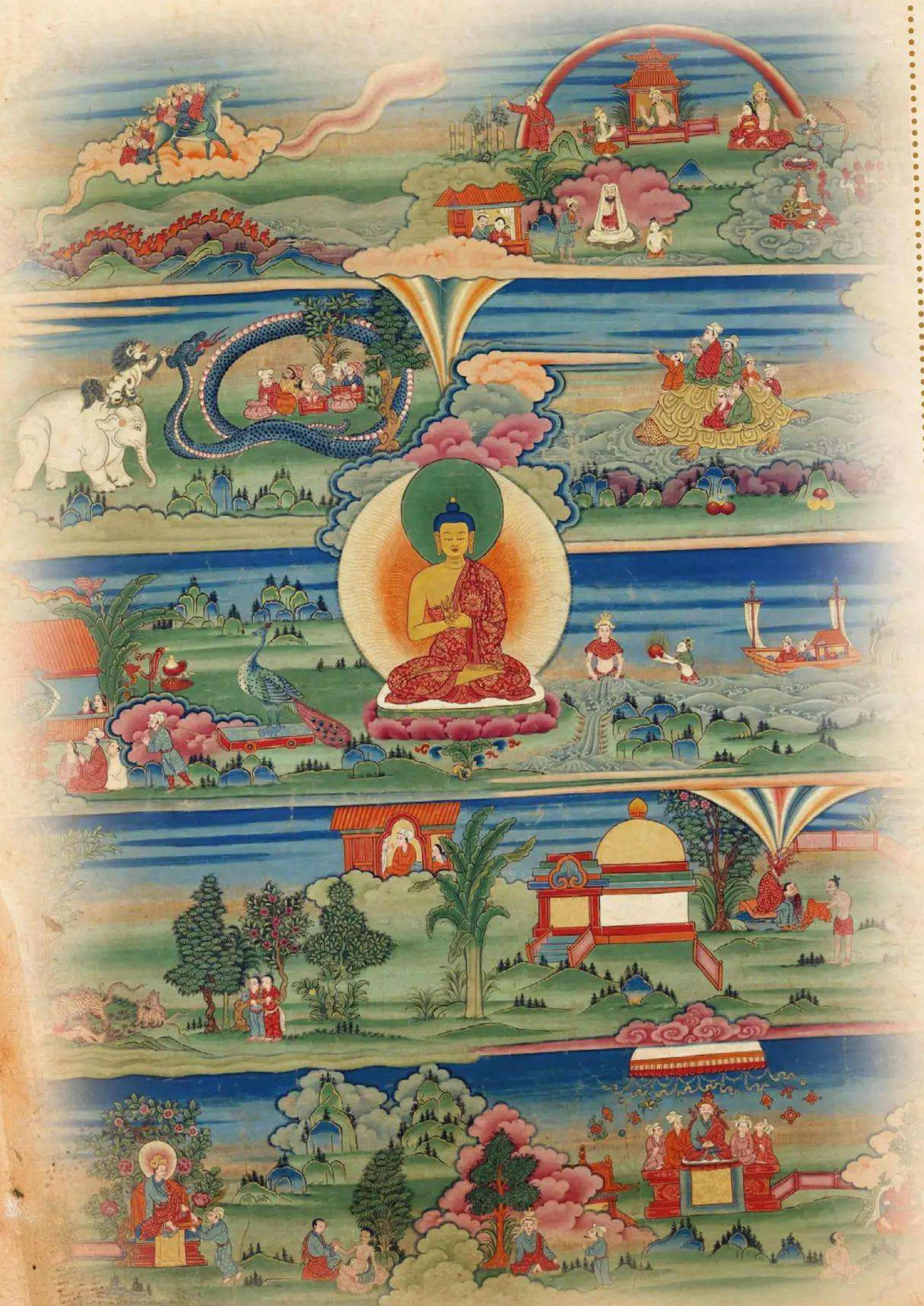
Jataka Tales

India, c.6th century BCE

Part of the *Pali* canon of Buddhist sacred literature, the *Jataka Tales* are some of the oldest stories in the world that can be considered to have aspects of what would later become known as 'fairy tales'. Believed to have originally been told by the Buddha himself, the *Jataka Tales* recount the past lives of the Buddha and like many tales of this nature, it is believed that they were passed down orally until someone decided to commit them to paper. In these stories, the Buddha appears as a variety of different human figures as well as animals, and in each tale an ethical lesson can be taken from the events depicted. Like in other incarnations of fairy tales, such as *Aesop's Fables*, morality plays a central part in the *Jataka Tales*. There are even some themes that appear in *Aesop's Fables* (which originated around the same time period) that also appear in this Indian collection.

Numbering at around 550, the *Jataka Tales* collection is much larger than most of the folktale anthologies that came after. The stories aim to impart wisdom and virtue, and entertain through an array of interesting characters that range from monkeys to tree spirits to demonic beings. The *Jataka Tales* are held in extremely high regard by Buddhists around the world.

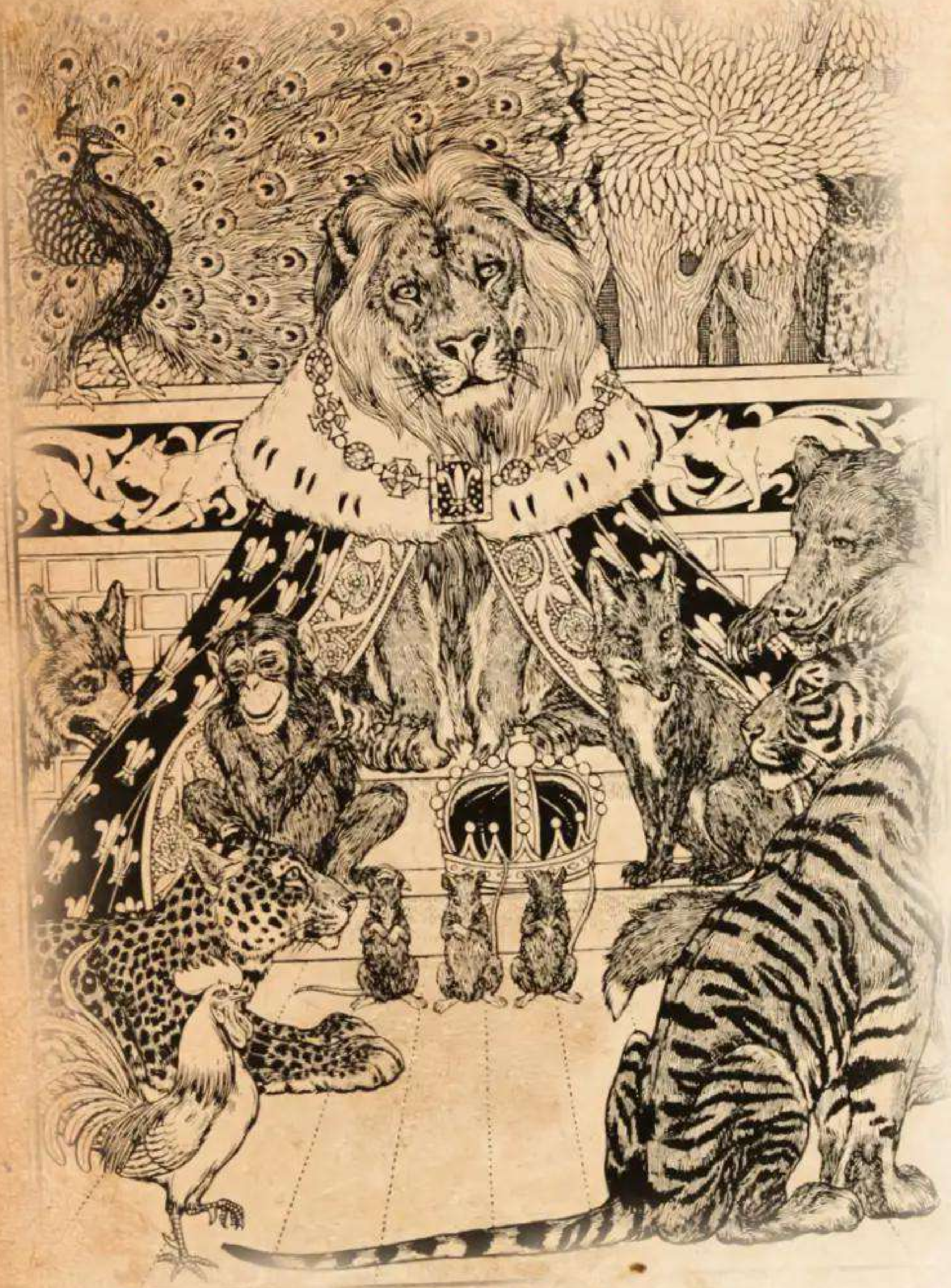


Pu Songling

China, c.1679

While the stories written by Chinese author Pu Songling in the 17th century may not often be referred to as fairy tales, they certainly feature many of the elements that one would characterise as typical in this genre of writing. The mystical and supernatural were central themes in the 431 stories that made up Pu Songling's most famous work *Liaozhai zhiyi* (Strange Tales From A Chinese Studio). Unlike many folktales, Pu Songling's storytelling work did not originate in the oral tradition, and instead were written in manuscripts that were then circulated.

Pu Songling suffered in poverty for most of his life, and used the fantastical stories he created not only as a means of escape, but also, much like the Brothers Grimm, as a way to comment on societal issues that he felt strongly about. It took him 40 years to compile all the stories, and the full collection was not published until 1766, over 50 years after Pu Songling's death. Everyday life serves as the basis for most of the stories in *Liaozhai zhiyi* with magical aspects giving his work the fairy tale facet. Shapeshifters, spirits, haunted houses and curses that turn badly behaved humans into animals make these Chinese tales akin to the European fairy tales more familiar in the Western world. In China, Pu Songling's tales have served as the inspiration for many authors of romantic fiction, and are still regarded as "the pinnacle of classical Chinese fiction" according to Penguin. ▶



Aesop's Fables

Greece, 6th century BCE

One of the most famous collections of mystical stories from history, *Aesop's Fables* are often characterised as morality tales. Originally composed in the oral tradition in Ancient Greece and later written down and attributed to Aesop, the stories in Aesop's anthology mostly feature a variety of animal characters with human qualities that interact with each other to highlight the flaws and undesirable behaviours of mankind.

Historian Herodotus described the fables' author as a slave, but Plutarch stated that Aesop was an advisor to Croesus, the King of Lydia. However, while the name Aesop is attached to the collection of fables, some historians doubt whether Aesop ever actually existed, instead ascribing the tales to a larger group of individual unknown authors. It is possible that the name Aesop was invented in order to give stories of this kind a sense of cohesion. In the myth of Aesop, making him a slave suggests that these stories may have been invented and told by and among slaves. If this was the case, it is possible that slaves hid important messages in the fables that told real stories of their experiences as marginalised and oppressed members of society. Some of the most famous of *Aesop's Fables* that continue to be hugely popular today include *The Tortoise And The Hare*, and *The Goose That Laid The Golden Eggs*.

Brothers Grimm

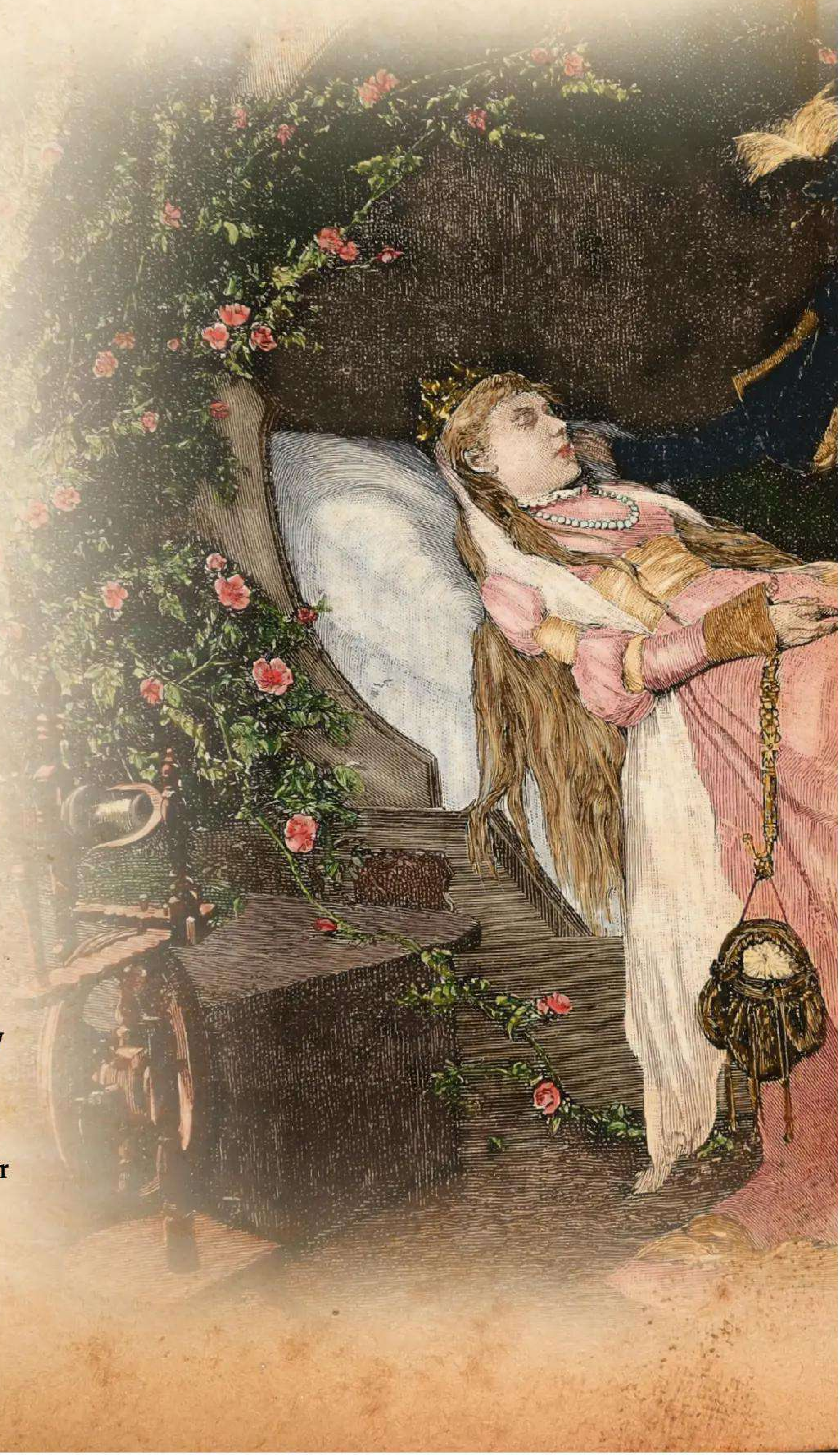
Germany, 1812

Arguably the most famous authors and collectors of folktales in history, the Brothers Grimm have become synonymous with the fairy tale genre and are responsible for the worldwide popularity of many of the stories considered to be classics today. Born in Hanau, Germany in 1785 and 1786 respectively, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm published *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children And Household Tales) in several volumes from 1812. Comprised of over 200 tales, their dark and twisted collection often shocks modern readers who are familiar with the Disney-fied versions of many of the Brothers Grimm's fairy tales such as *Sleeping Beauty*, *Snow White* and *Rapunzel*.

Contrary to popular belief, the fairy tales collected by the Brothers Grimm were never intended to entertain children. Dedicated to recording folktales from across Northern European history, the brothers saw the tales as reflections of different beliefs and customs and as a way to preserve the cultures of the past. They also acted as a commentary on the harsh realities of life for many, with some of the stories in their first edition including *How Some Children Played At Slaughtering* and *The Children Of Famine*.

Sinister themes of violence and abuse are present throughout many of the Grimms' tales. For example, in their version of *Cinderella* the stepsisters cut their own toes off to fit into the slipper and ultimately end up having their eyes pecked out by doves. In *Snow White*, the hunter takes the seven-year-old protagonist into the forest to kill her and intends to return with her lungs and liver. In other lesser known tales such as *The Jew In The Brambles*, antisemitism plays a huge role in the brothers' portrayal of Jewish people. As a result, Nazis in the 20th century used the collection of fairy tales as part of their propaganda.

Despite all this, the Brothers Grimm are often credited with saving and preserving folktales that may otherwise have been lost to history. Their anthology became the second most popular book in Germanic speaking countries, next to the *Bible*.



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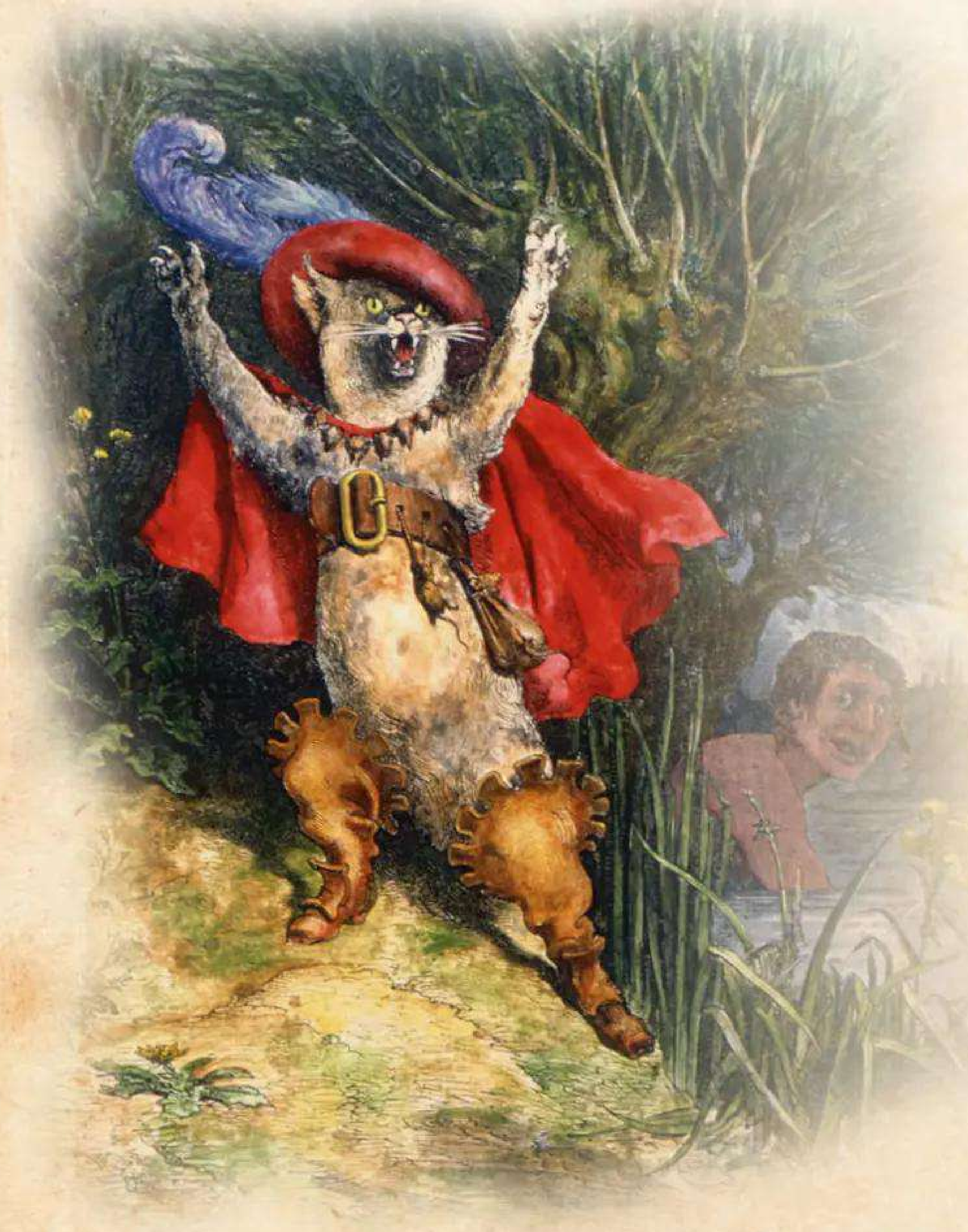
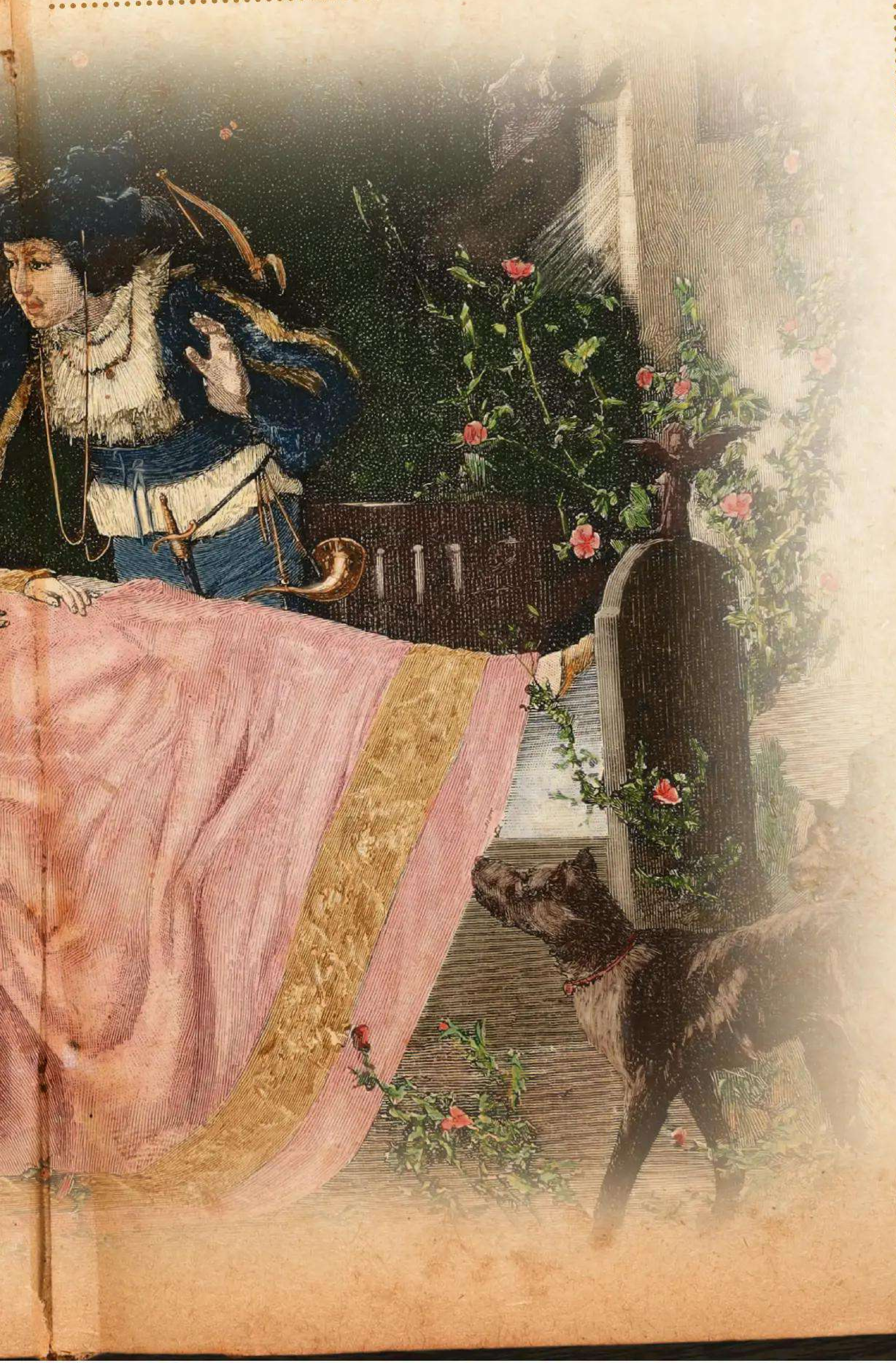


Charles Perrault

France, 1697

Parisian writer Charles Perrault is heralded as the man who created the fairy tale genre. For the majority of his career, Perrault worked in government service and as the secretary for the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, a society of scholars established in 1663. He also worked alongside King Louis XIV to help design the gardens of the Palace of Versailles. It is clear that Perrault was already inspired by folktales and mystical literature, as he suggested the inclusion of 39 fountains in Versailles' labyrinth that represented each of the fables in Aesop's famous anthology.

Perrault retired and dedicated his time to writing at the age of 55. Focusing mostly on poetry, Perrault did not start writing his collection of fairy tales until he was in his 60s, an endeavour he took on as a way to devote his time to his children. He took inspiration from the stories that had been told in the salons of 17th century France, committing them to paper and publishing *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passé* (Tales And Stories Of The Past With Morals) in 1697. The book's subtitle was *Les Contes de ma Mère l'Oye* (The Tales Of Mother Goose) and featured versions of folktales such as *Sleeping Beauty*, *Puss In Boots* and *Cinderella*, the latter of which he took inspiration for from Giambattista Basile's *Tale Of Tales*. Upon publication, Perrault's collection of fairy tales became hugely successful and popular. The occasion is considered as the birth of the fairy tale as we recognise it today.

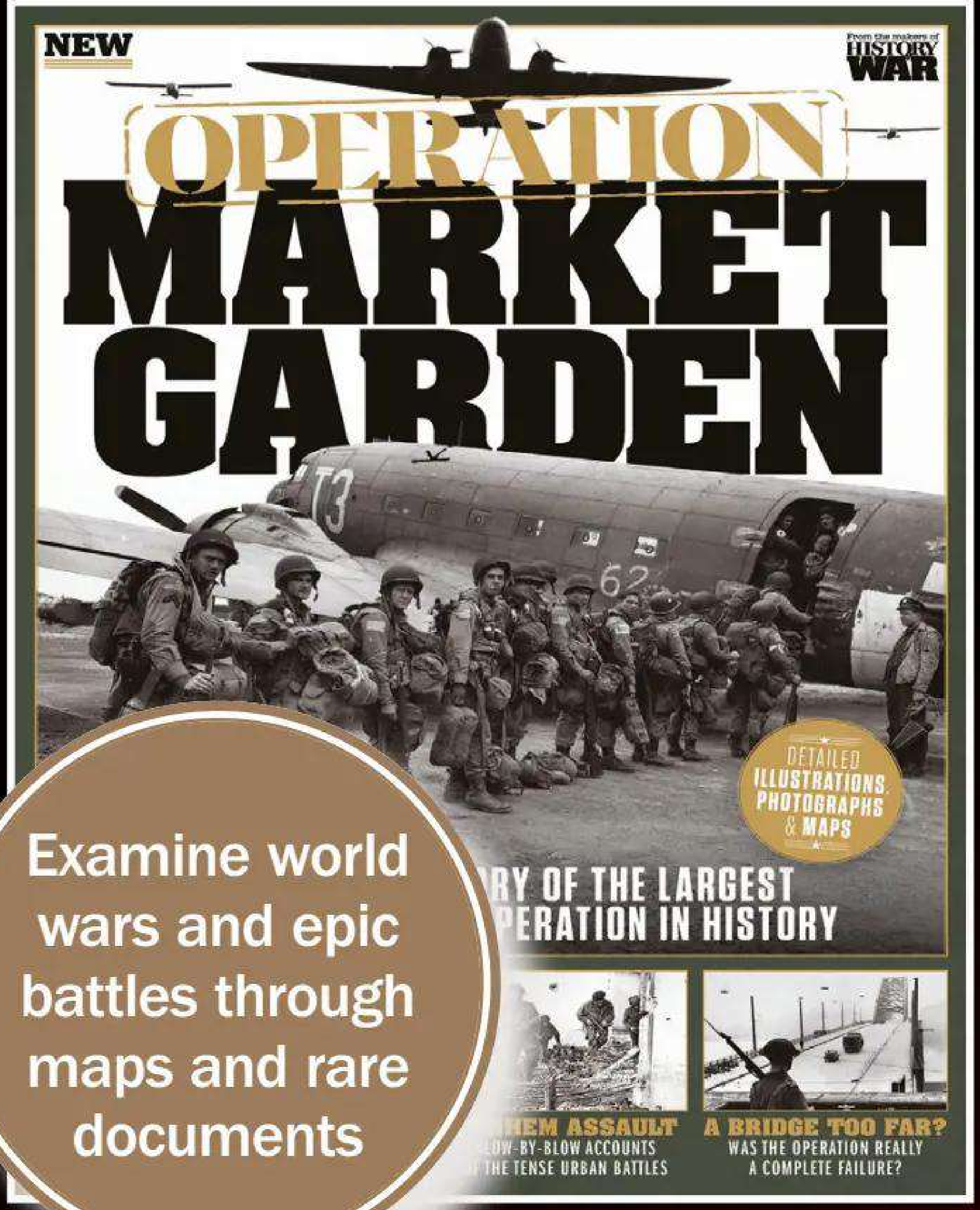


Madame d'Aulnoy

France, 1697

In the same year that Charles Perrault published his collection of folktales, a French baroness also produced her own selection of mystical stories to great acclaim. Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy, more commonly known as Madame d'Aulnoy, had been a published author for years before she published her *Les Contes Des Fées* (Tales Of Fairies), in which she coined the term "fairy tale" for the first time. At the time of Madame d'Aulnoy's writing, magical tales were becoming popular narratives within the salons of Paris. It is believed that the conversational style in which Madame d'Aulnoy wrote her fairy tales was heavily influenced by the oral storytelling in Paris' salons.

Many of the stories written by Madame d'Aulnoy are not as recognisable as those written by others like her, possibly because she was influenced by the tales she heard but then added her own spin to them in order to comment on political and societal matters. Her work was also shaped by her personal experience, with the story of *The Blue Bird* written as a critique of the practice of forced marriages, of which she herself had been a victim. As a female voice in the development of the fairy tale genre, Madame d'Aulnoy's is not one that should be ignored. ○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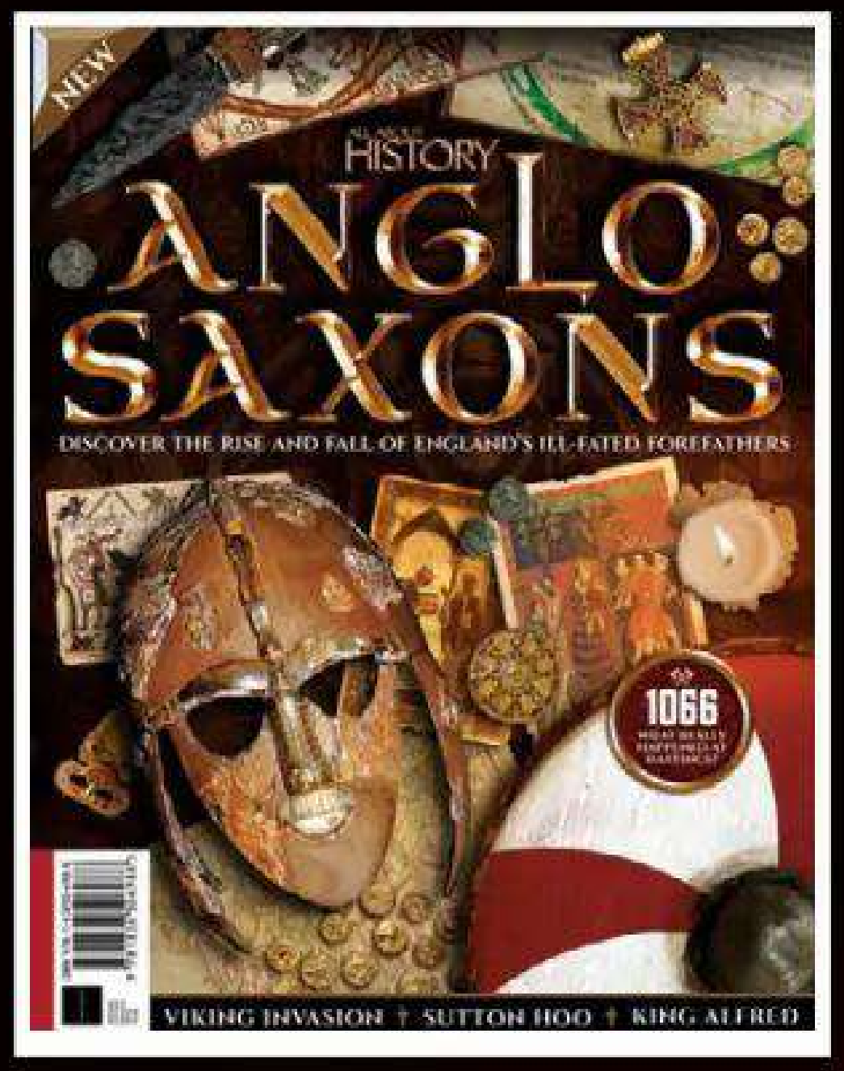
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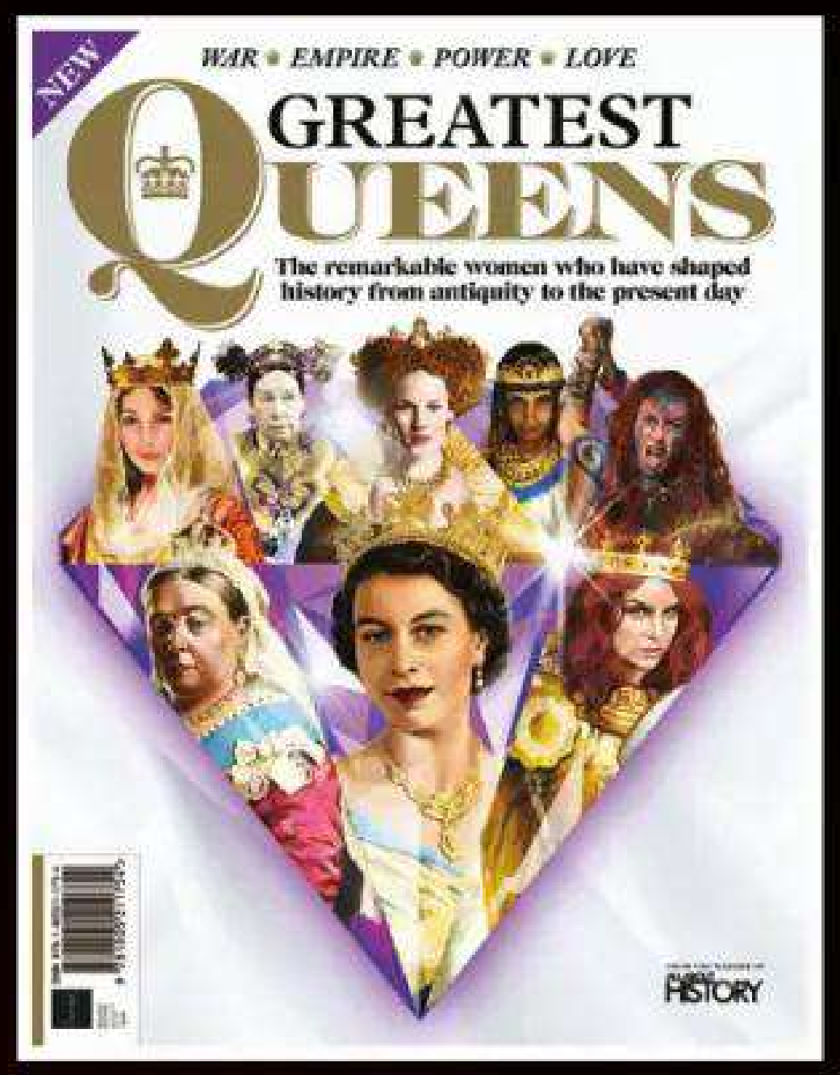
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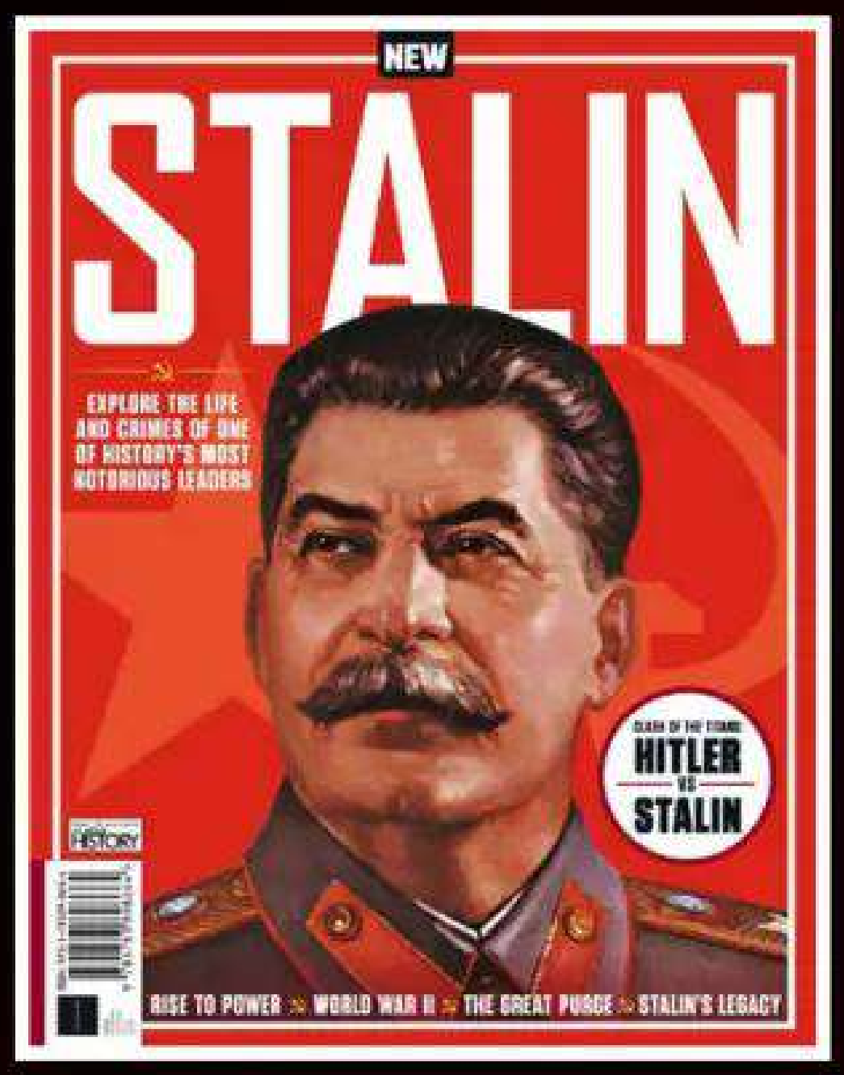

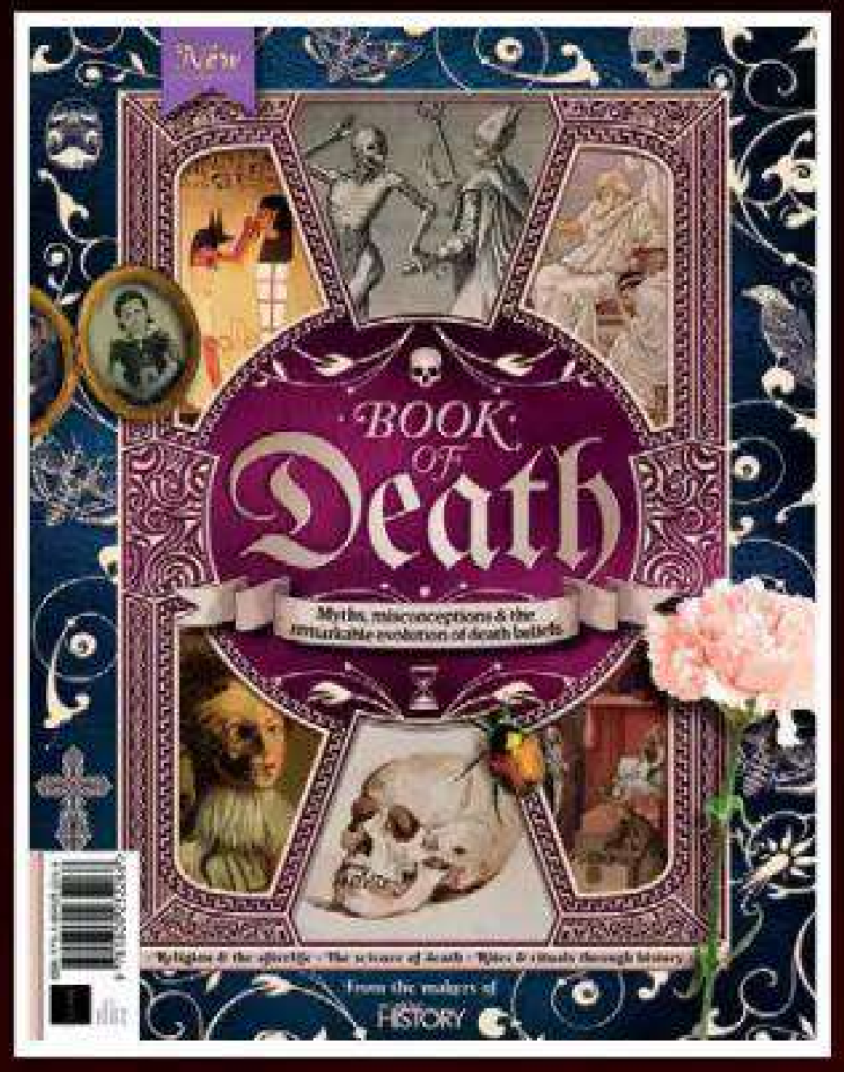
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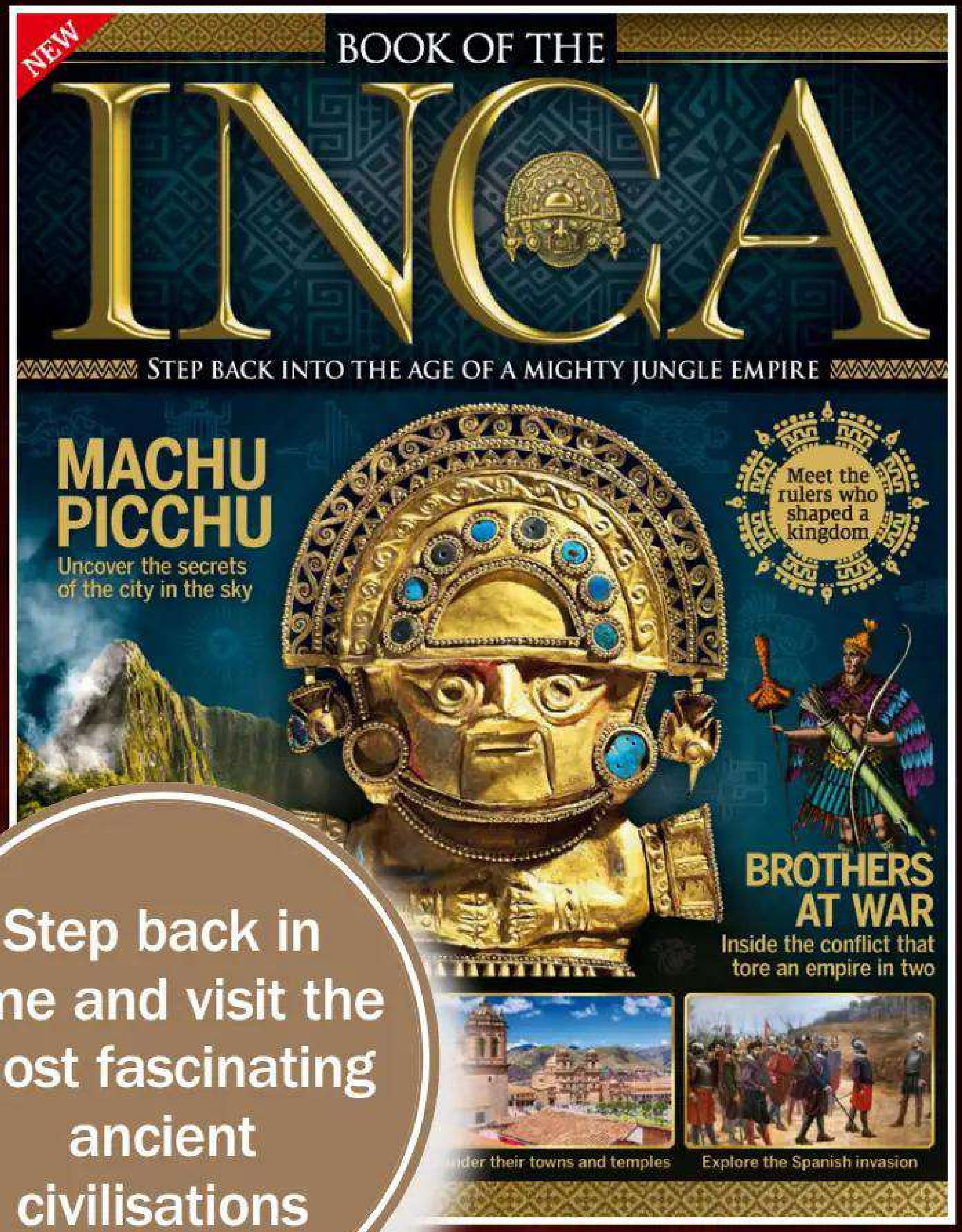
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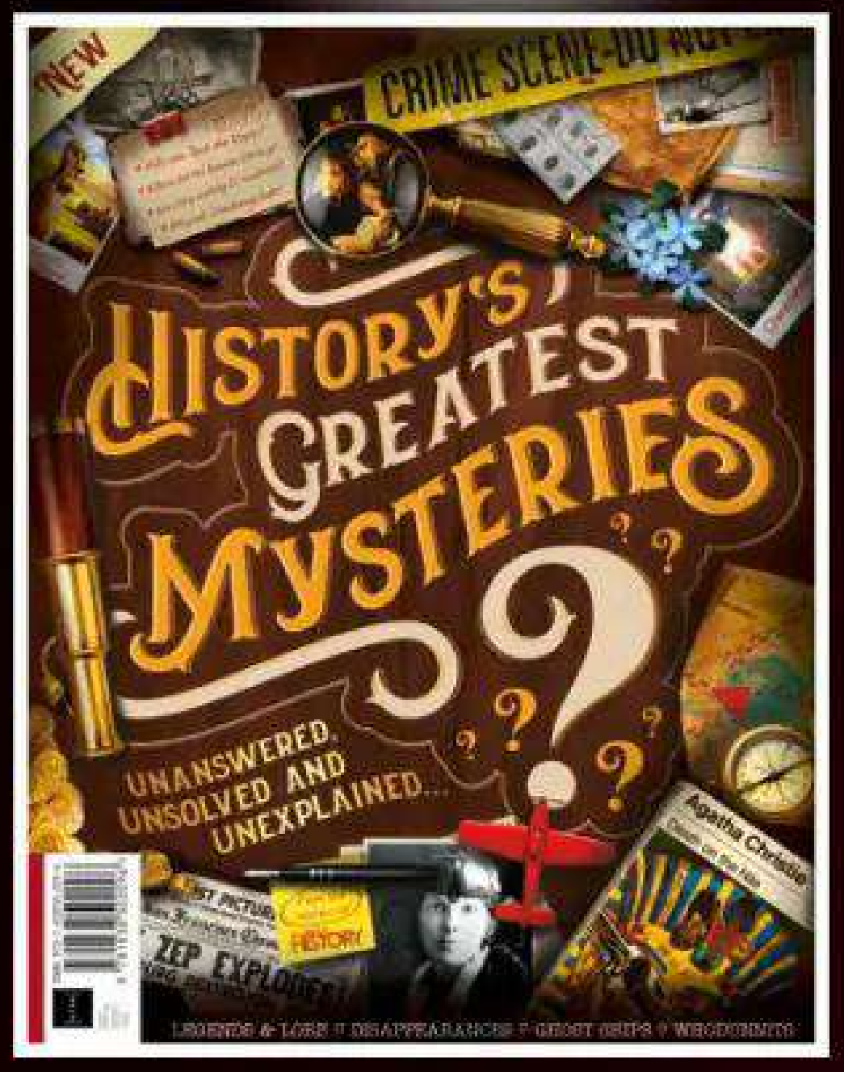
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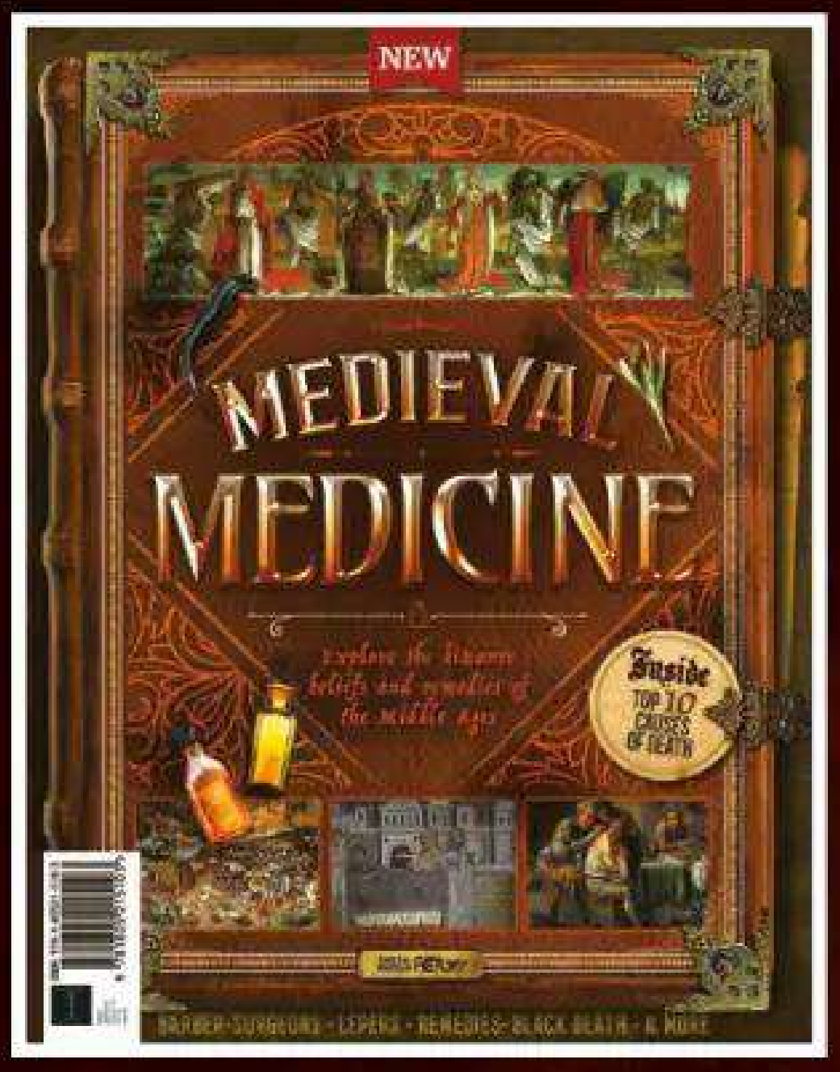
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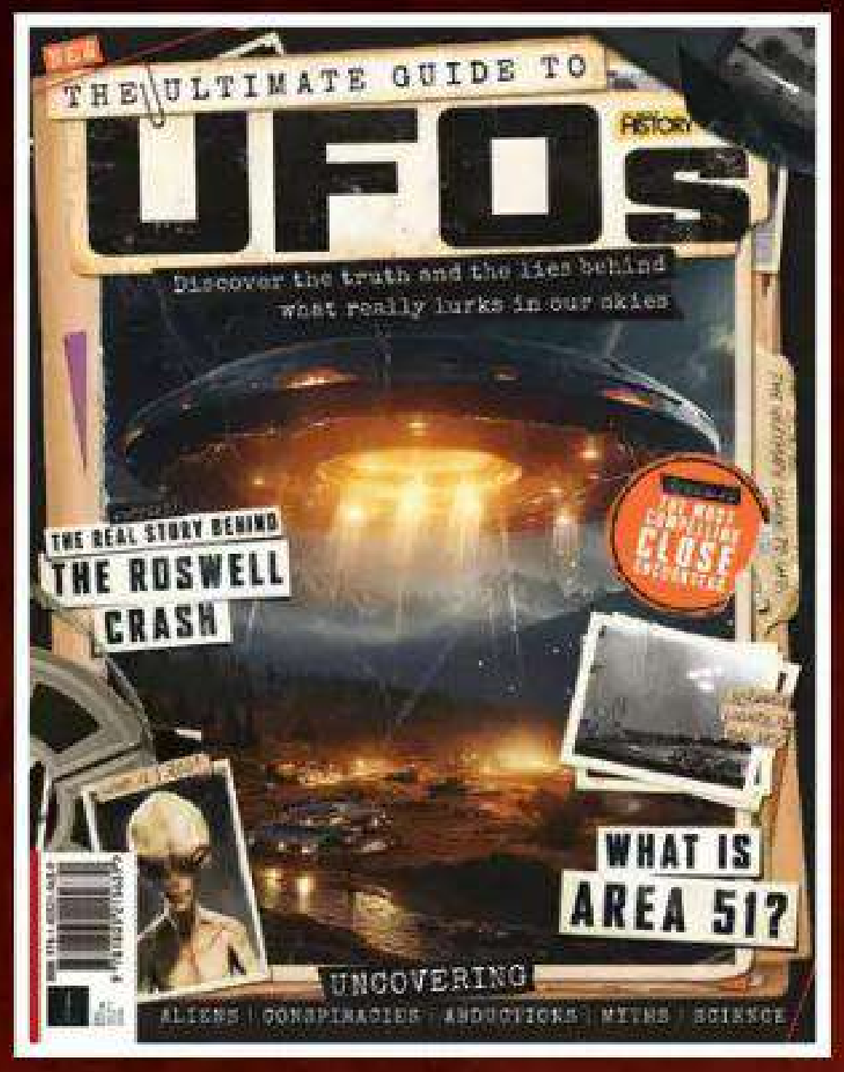
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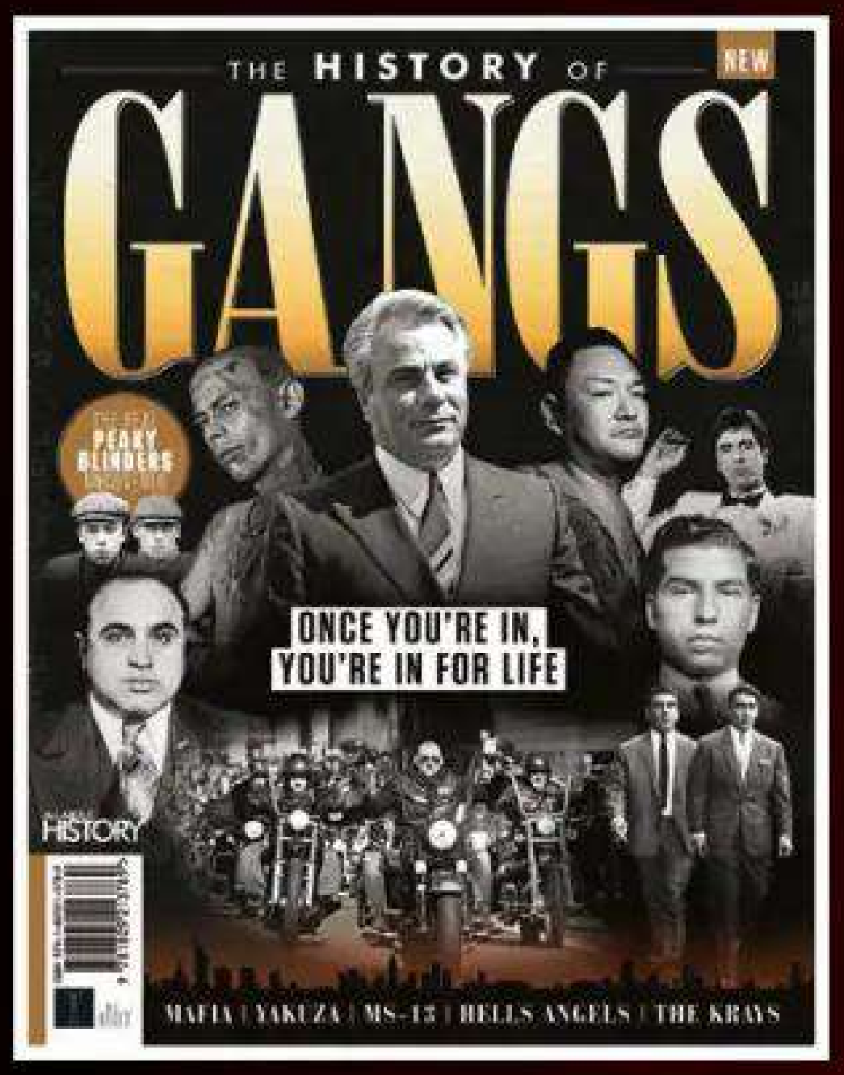
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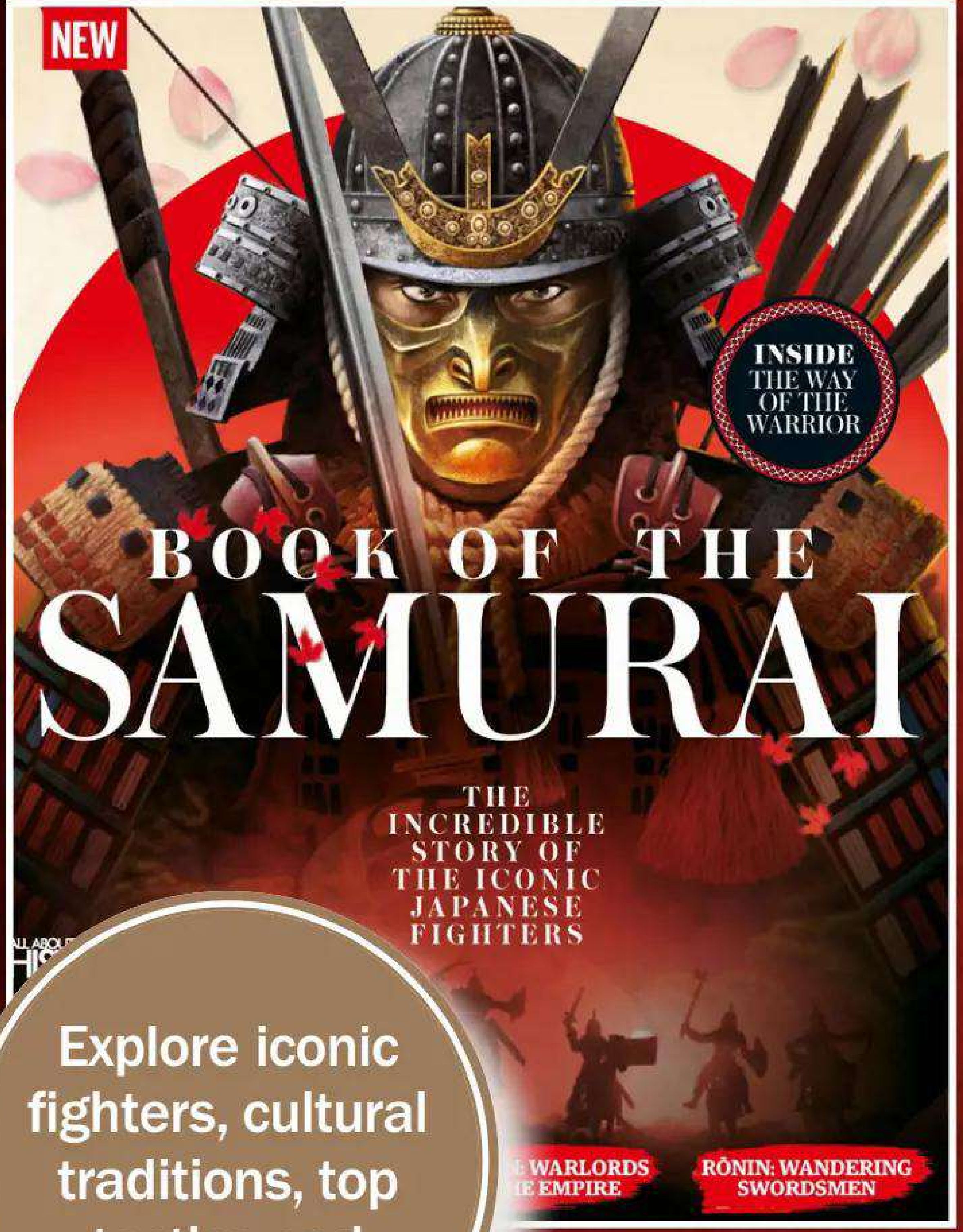
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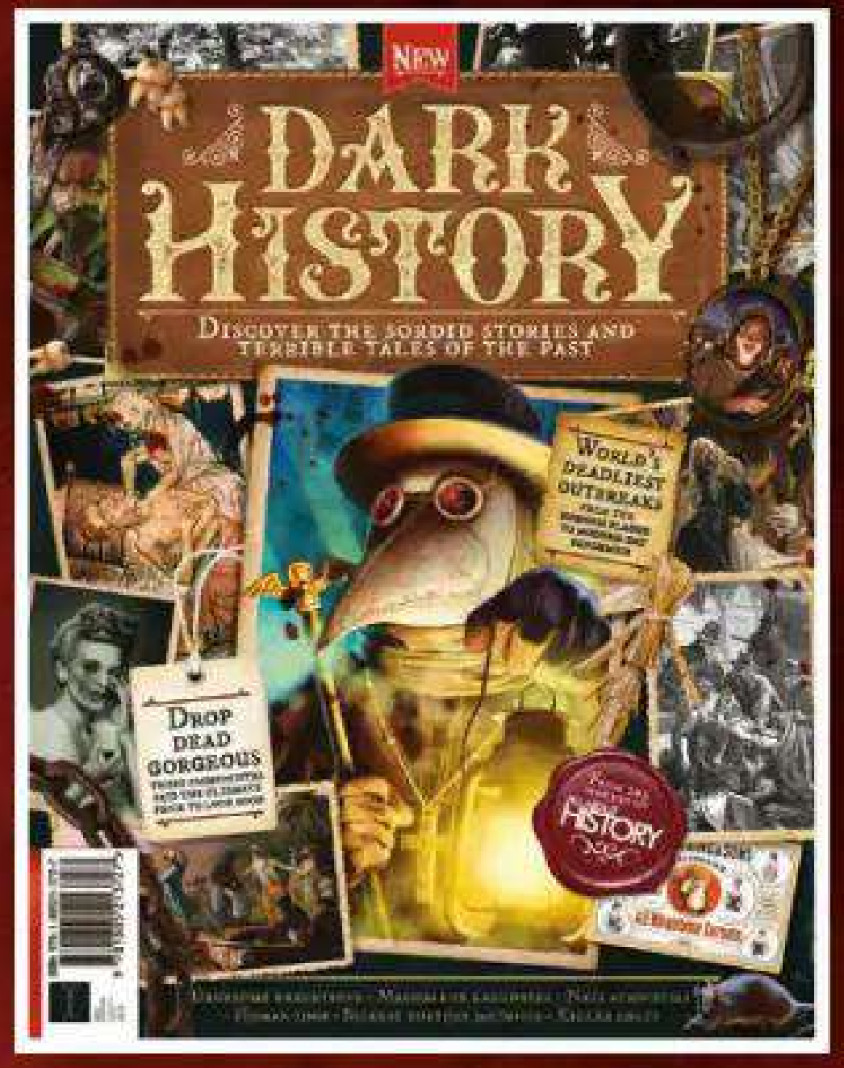
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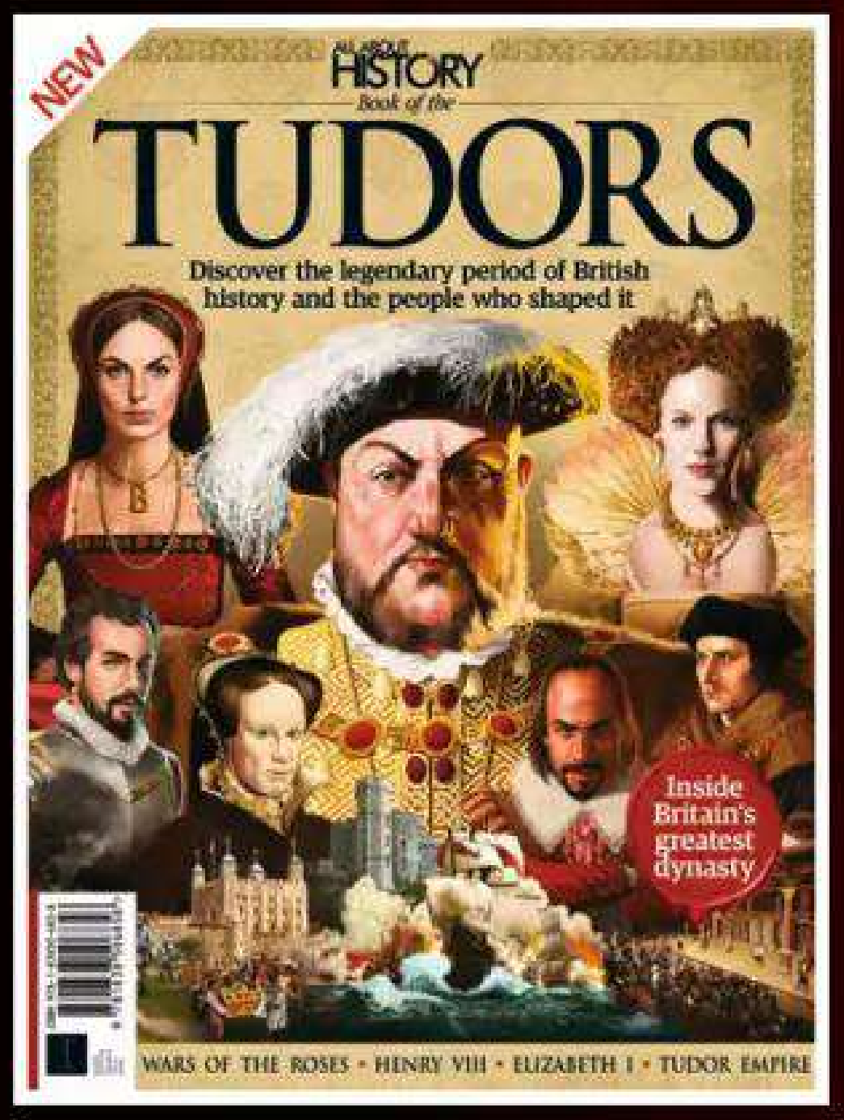

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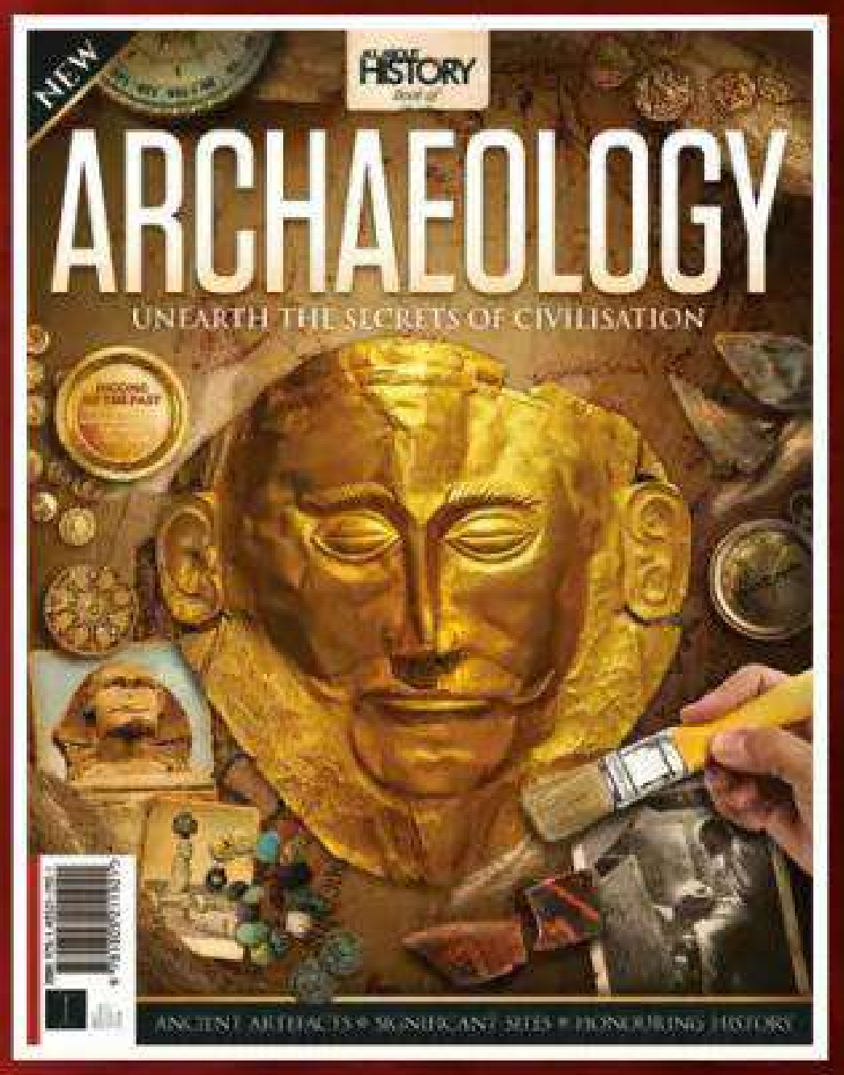
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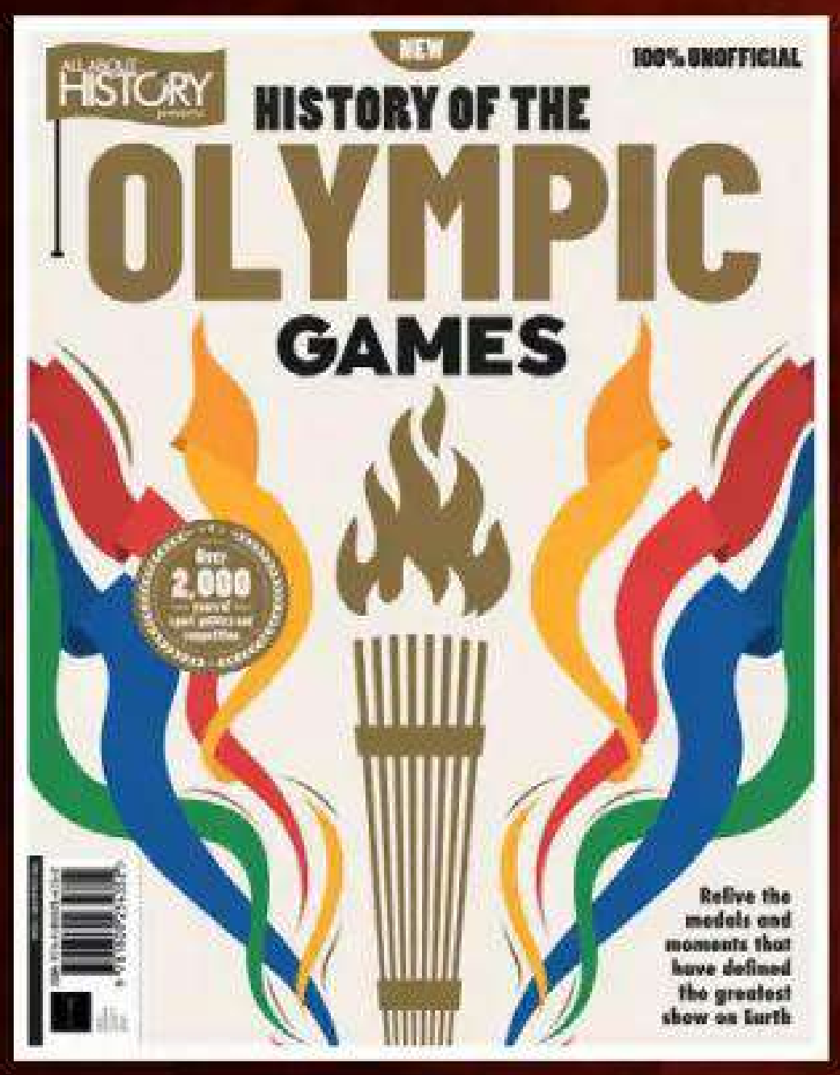
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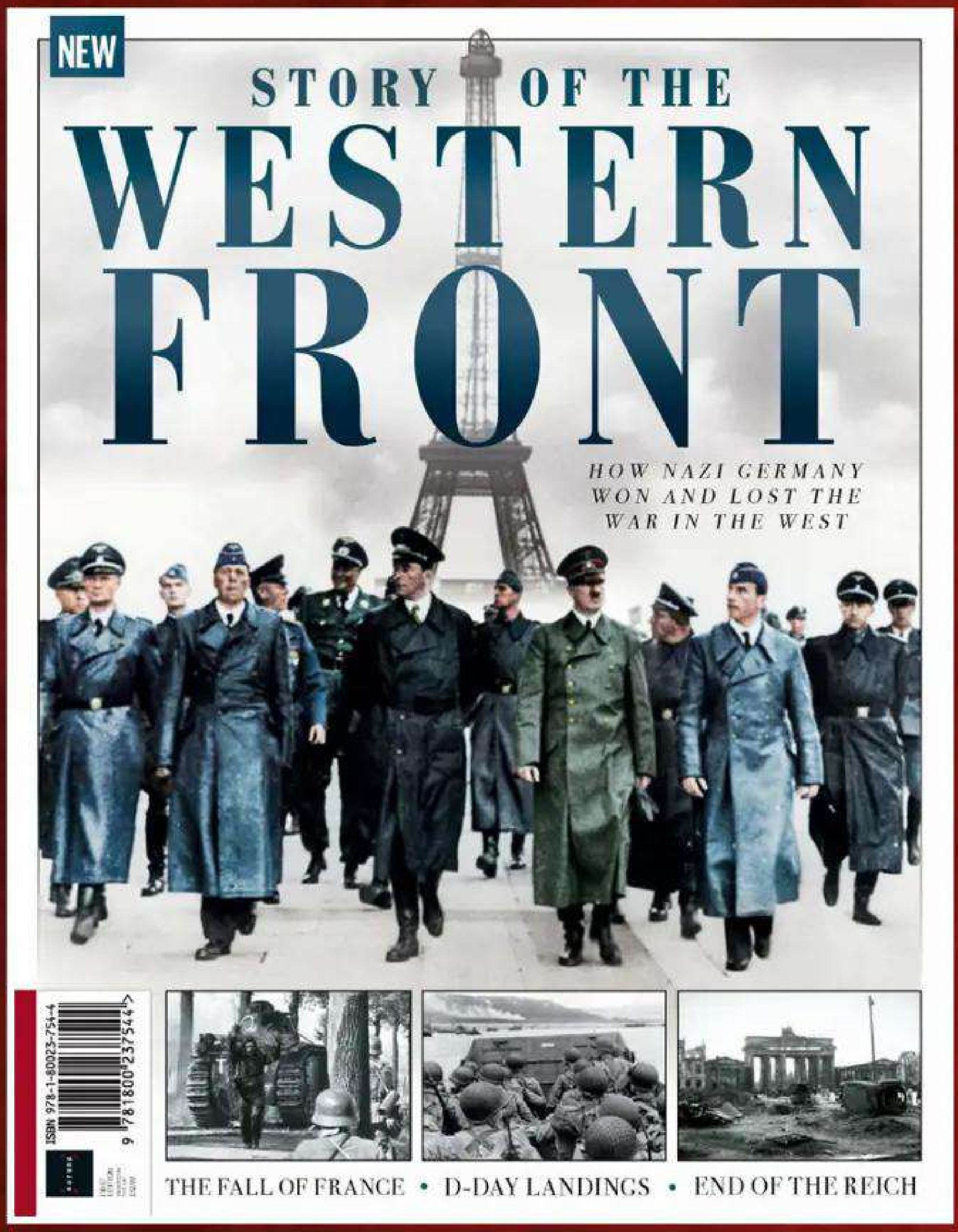
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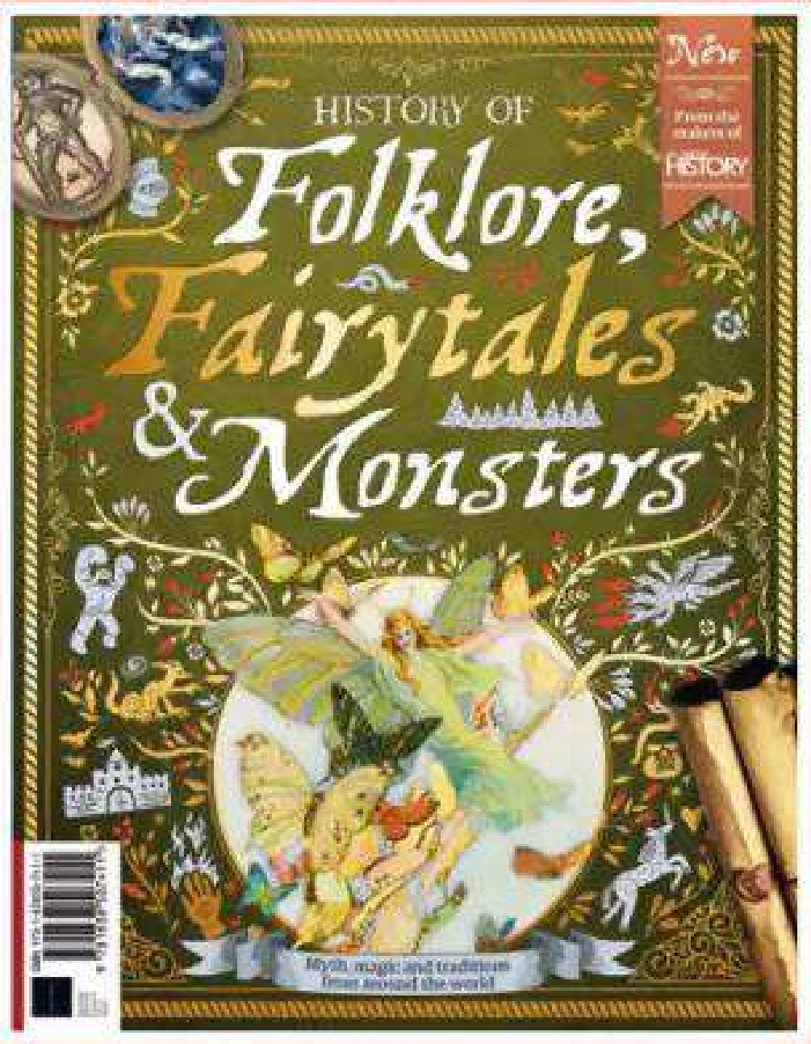
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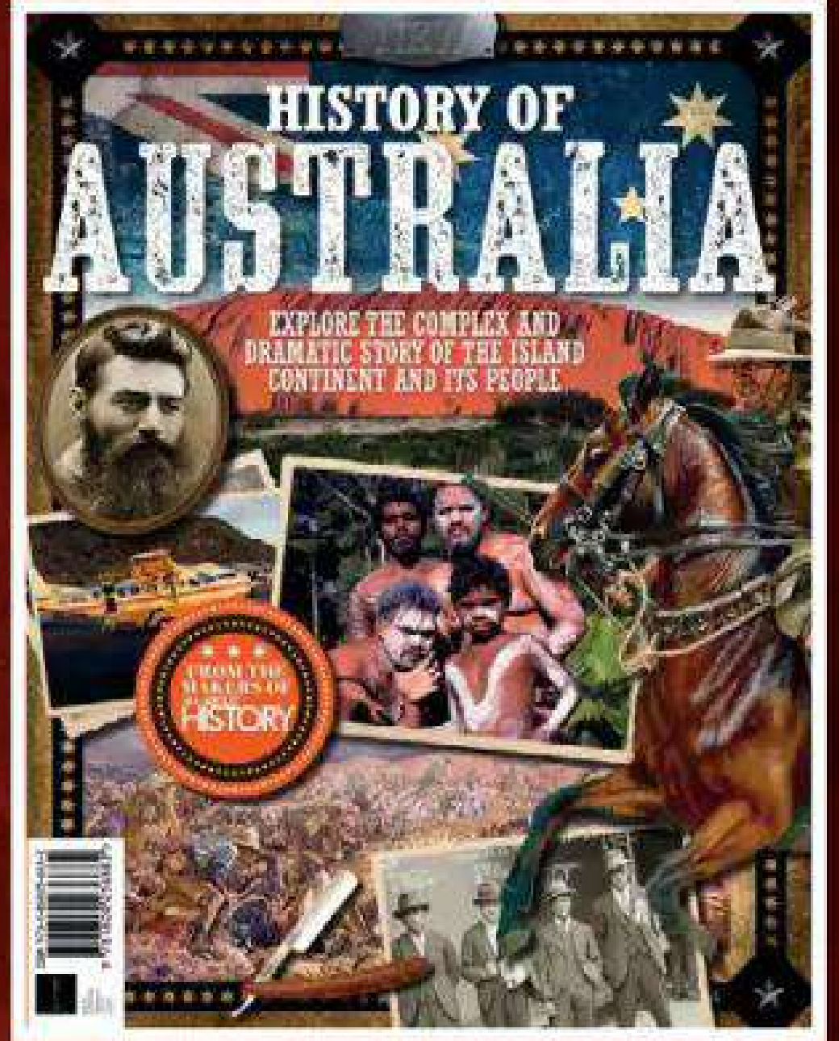
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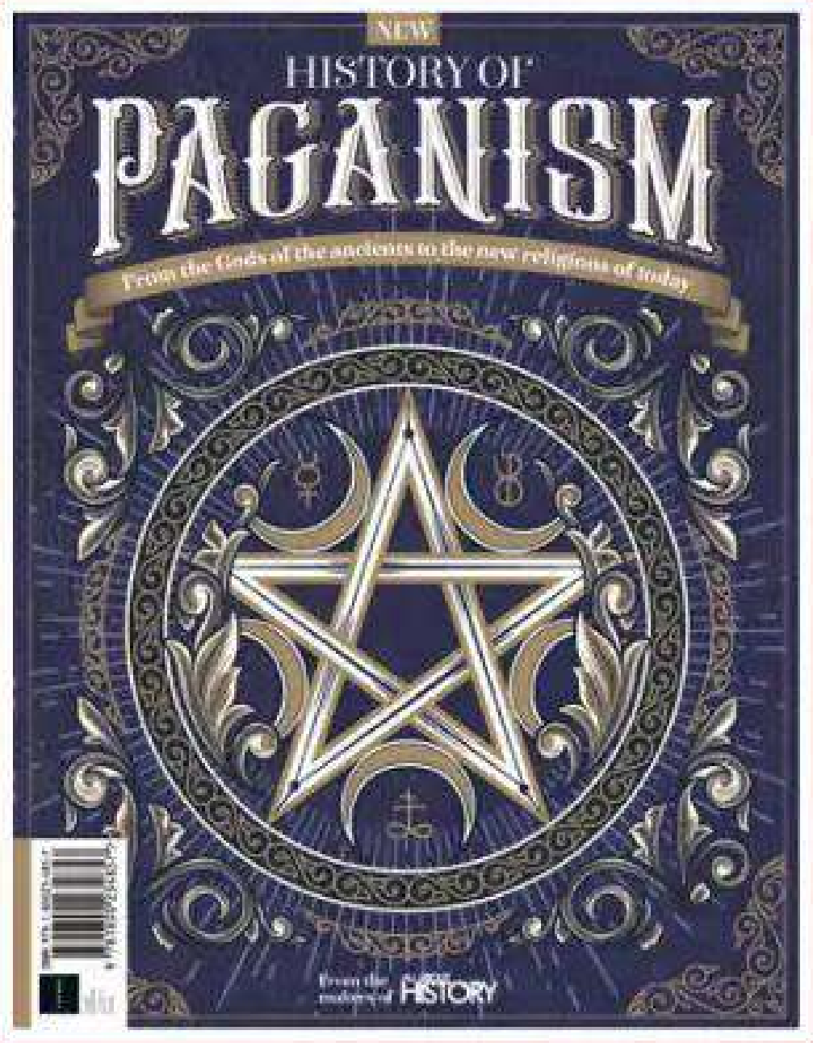
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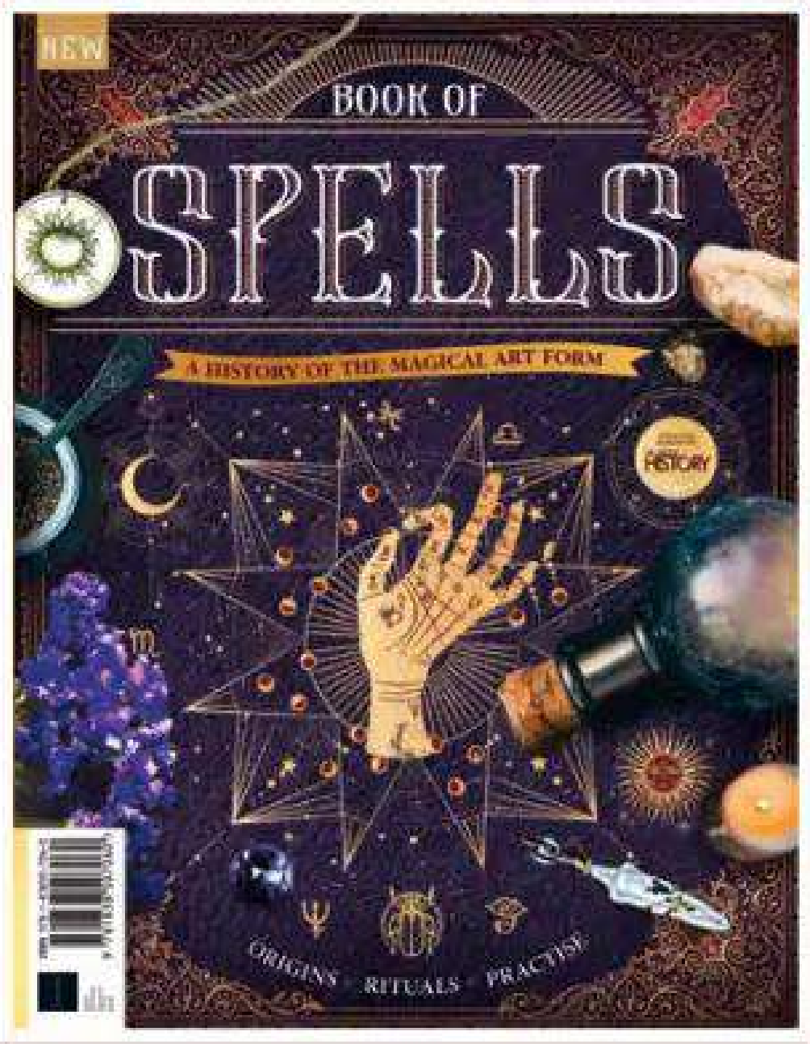
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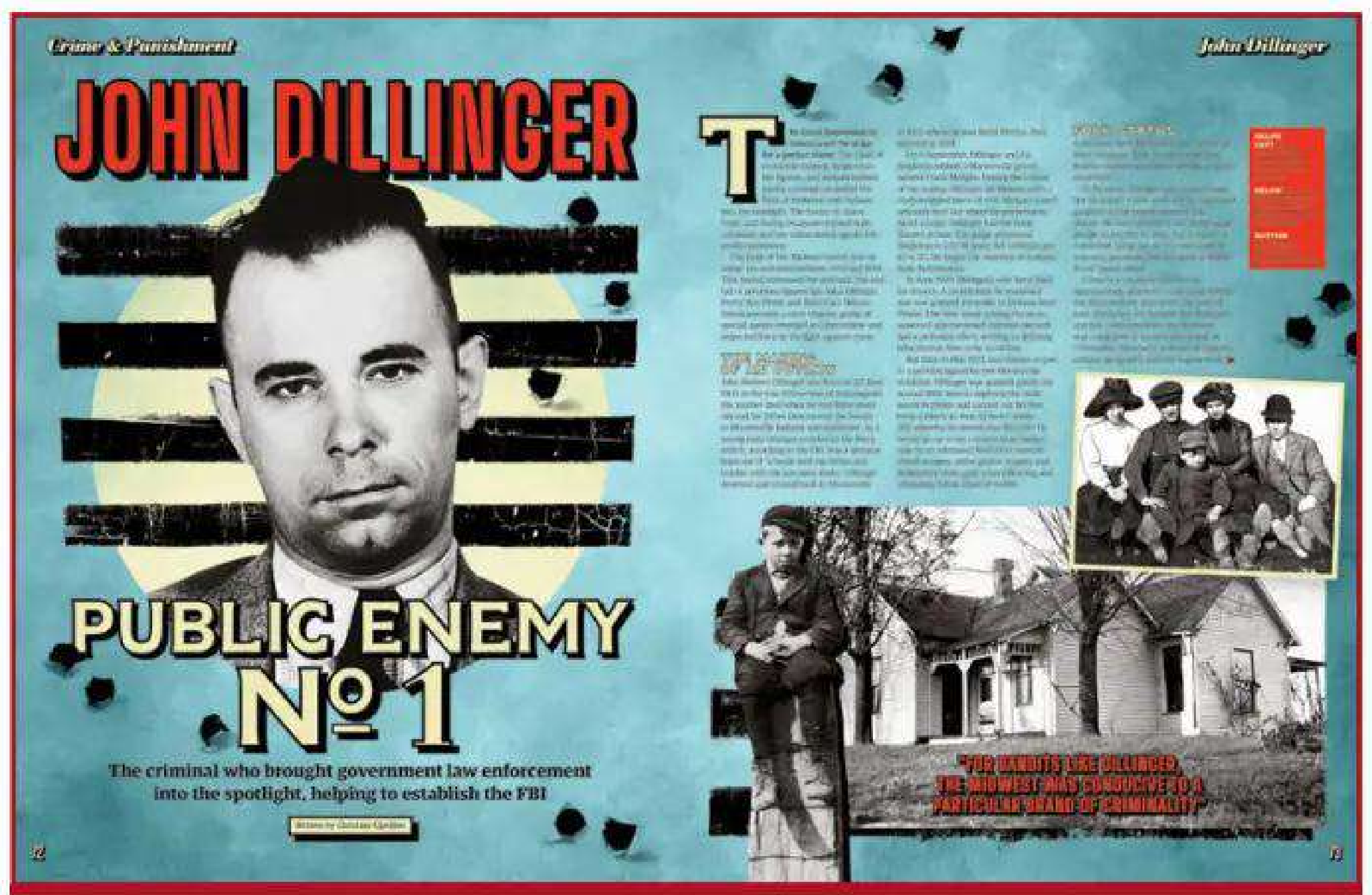
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